

North Carolina Folklore Journal

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North Carolina Folklore Journal

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Melissa Mayer and Amber Raynor of Benson sell produce at the Johnson's Farm stall, North Carolina Farmers Market, Raleigh. *Photo by John N. Wall, 2004.*

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Editor's Foreword

When we originally planned this issue of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*, we did not intend specifically to highlight the subjects of food and grandmothers. But sometimes we get lucky, and that's precisely what happened. In various ways, grandmothers inspired each of the three essays that follow: John Wall's Georgia McMurray MacGregor; Foy Edleman's Lucy Purefoy Sawyer; and Calvin Dark's Mabel McMasters Bowden. These women compel me to recall my own grandmother, Rose Pascarelli Prioli. Rose accompanied her father to the United States from southern Italy when she was twelve. At fifteen, she was married. At forty-four in 1944, she was the mother of six sons, five of whom served simultaneously and with distinction in the armed forces during World War II.

Once she settled in South Boston, Massachusetts, to raise a family, Rose Prioli in all of her eighty-five years rarely ventured more than twenty miles from her home. She never returned to Italy. But somehow she convinced us that she knew more about the world and its dangers than anyone else. Next to her devotion to family and her belief in the dignity of hard work, I most readily remember the Italian cookies my grandmother rolled and baked for the holidays (Christmas and Easter). I also remember the inch-wide *gnocchi* she cut from narrow cords of egg dough, and then shaped with repeated flips of the index and second fingers of her right hand. A half-century has not dimmed the memory of those homemade delicacies.

Each of the three essays we include in this issue is motivated by an effort to reconnect with the memories and values of a cherished past, and to transmit those memories and values to future generations. We all do this in our own ways and perhaps on a daily basis. Often, even the food we prepare and serve connects us with the past as much for our mental health as for our physical nourishment. In his essay "Of Divers Colors, and Wonderfull Plentie" John Wall argues that the lure of "farmers" markets and trendy "natural and organic" food stores is, in part, that they provide an essential ingredient missing from the shrink-wrapped and packaged products that crowd the freezers and shelves of modern supermarket chains. These chains feed our bodies, but they offer nothing to our souls. So, we are drawn to farmers markets and to alternative establishments with comforting names like "Whole Foods," "Earth Fare," and "Wellspring." Whole Foods tries to nurture us with their belief in "a virtuous circle entwining the food chain [connecting] human

beings and Mother Earth: each is reliant upon the others through a beautiful and delicate symbiosis” (www.wholefoodsmarket.com).

We can only guess what our grandmothers would say about this expression of a kind of corporate mothering. Georgia McMurray MacGregor was probably not thinking about the food chain’s “virtuous circle” when she was wringing the neck of a chicken for Sunday dinner. What we are privileged to offer, however, here and on our website (www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ) are the recorded recipes and comments of several wonderful grandmothers. While few of us may have a taste for roast bear (17-20) or souse meat (47-50), we will all find nourishment in the wisdom and the voices of women like Jenny Vance, Margaret King, “Mam-maw” Zim, Lula Owl, and Inez Blackwell, among others.

Carmine Prioli

“Of Divers Colors, and Wonderfull Plentie”

Documenting Continuity and Change at the North Carolina Farmers Market*

~ by John N. Wall

Because my grandmother was proficient in killing a chicken and preparing it on a wood-fired cook-stove, I am one of a dwindling number of North Carolinians who know the smell of pinfeathers singeing over an open fire. However, I am also of the generation of Americans who in the 1960s and 1970s discovered the “joy of cooking” not from parents or grandparents, but from television, foreign travel, and trendy cookbooks. After countless childhood dinners of frozen lima beans and fish sticks, we hungered for the quiches and pestos, the pael-las and ratatouilles that came from the Cambridge and Berkeley kitchens of Julia Child and Alice Waters. But the fresh ingredients that dishes like these demanded were nowhere on display in our local Winn-Dixie or Piggly-Wiggly. The mandatory field-ripened tomatoes or fresh greens, parsley, sage, rosemary, or thyme were, in those days, more likely to be available in farmers markets than in the gleaming supermarkets that were quickly becoming centers of life in our growing suburbs.

Farmers living near Raleigh have been bringing the products of their labors to market in the city since it was founded in the late eighteenth century. In fact, the core of Raleigh’s old downtown is the City Market on Moore Square. In the 1950s, the local government supported the construction by a private developer of a larger facility on the north side of Raleigh, located at 1401 Hodges Street. This facility was bought by the State of North Carolina in 1961 and incorporated into the state’s Department of Agriculture.

The growing success of this market led, in the 1970s, to a commitment to build a bigger facility. The current state-owned Farmers Market off of Lake Wheeler Road in south Raleigh is the result of those plans. This market opened for business in 1991. It occupies seventy-five acres of land, provides space for vendors, and is accessible from Interstate 40, which links Wilmington, North Carolina, to Barstow, California, 2,554 miles to the west.

*“*They have also Beanes very faire, of divers colors, and wonderfull plentie: some growing naturally, and some in their gardens.*” ~ Captain Arthur Barlowe (1584)

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Keith W. Allen (1963-2005) of Johnson’s Farm in Johnston County.

A casual shopper at the Farmers Market for years, I was drawn there as a photographer by subjects that inspire strong images—the energy and concentration, the constant action and interaction, all within a limited space. The architecture of the shed under which dealers set up their stalls forms a natural backdrop, framing the activities that take place beneath it and defining a place of cool shade apart from the often intense glare of sunlight outside. The rows of light fixtures, the supporting columns, and beams have a way of framing one's experience of the displays, the searching for products, the buying and selling, that occur almost daily throughout the year, from early morning until late afternoon.

One also witnesses the transition of the seasons, as fresh peaches yield to fresh apples, and cut flowers are replaced by firewood and split oak baskets, and summer's cucumbers and squash become autumn's gourds and pumpkins. Some stalls disappear with the changing seasons while others, like their owners, have become almost permanent fixtures.

I am also lured by the variety of people, young and old, and many in between, of diverse backgrounds and origins. Some folks look like they've been there since the days of my North Carolina small town childhood fifty years ago—white folks and black folks—while others are relatively new arrivals from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Americas.

As a so-called “foodie” visiting the new Farmers Market in south Raleigh, I continued to find the fresh produce I needed. But my experiences there became progressively more personal and interactive. During one summer visit, I bought a basket of peaches at the Pee Dee Orchards booth. I said to the salesperson that I hoped things were okay in Anson County, and that I would soon visit her other shop on the banks of the Pee Dee River after my family's annual reunion in Morven. She said that of the hundreds of customers who passed through the Market that day, I was probably the only one who knew where Anson County was. We talked for a while about our home county, and about the fact that we were both born in Wadesboro, although I had not lived there for over thirty years.

One day I met another dealer at the Market named Larry Carter. We also soon found ourselves talking about “down home.” He had grown up in Ellerbe, on the Grassy Island Road, in Richmond County. I had not heard anyone mention that road since my father talked about it, years before. At this point, I had already become interested in capturing images of the people at the Market, and I became aware that in photographing them I was not just engaging a community of people who were interesting and worth documenting in and of themselves, although that was certainly true. I was also reconnecting with a large part of my own

history as a native of North Carolina, noting continuities as well as changes, realizing how far one can travel in one's own life's journey and still be close to home.

I've come to think of the Farmers Market as the crossroad where eastern North Carolina meets the Research Triangle, where traditional agriculture satisfies the romance of modern appetites, and where changes in the population of North Carolina have transformed buyers and sellers. Today, growers from surrounding counties selling tomatoes, collards, and sweet potatoes are joined by farmers specializing in honey and goat cheese. Market vendors may have parents and grandparents who tilled the fields of Johnston County, but they may also be immigrants from Nigeria or Morocco.

Some people who maintain stalls at the Market have deep roots in the state's agriculture. They have chosen to work at the Market to rejoin their parents or to resume the life patterns of their youth. As one dealer told me, "Today, you have to like it. If you grew up on a farm and you liked it, you just can't get it out of your system. You come back to it. But you have to like it."

Others have college degrees in business and have turned to farming as a financial enterprise and a lifestyle. Several of the year-round vendors have tried other work—teaching, state government, office jobs. For them, maintaining a stall at the Farmers Market is a conscious lifestyle choice, an alternative to what they view as the hustle and bustle of commercial or industrial America. They are there because they want to be there.

Like many other Southerners now practicing professions, my own roots lie deep in the land and in the practice of agriculture. My ancestors have lived and farmed the soil of south-central North Carolina since the mid-1700s. The peculiar mix of tradition and transformation that is reflected in today's Farmers Market—its sellers and buyers—is also reflected in my family's history. My grandmother, Georgia McMurray MacGregor, lived in a small town when I was a child, yet she still maintained a chicken lot in her back yard. Sunday meals in grandmother's household involved a complex transformation of a living chicken into a dinner table entrée. But she did not pass those skills on to me and they are lost arts in this world of shopping for boneless chicken breasts, even in those fashionably downscale markets specializing in "natural and organic" foods.

If in my grandmother's Sunday dinners the foodways of the nineteenth century persisted into the twentieth, change was on the way. For my grandmother in later life, as well as for her daughter, Julia Little MacGregor, the preparation of fresh food was considered laborious and

time-consuming. To my aunt, caught up in her life as a professional educator, and to my grandmother in her retirement, traditional Southern cooking was a practice they seemed ready to forego when quickly-prepared frozen or canned vegetables or meats became available in grocery stores and supermarkets. The kind of cooking they both knew from the farm soon was relegated to holidays or other special occasions. At our most recent family reunion, “the Colonel” prepared all the fried chicken my relatives brought.

Yet the Farmers Market benefits from another trend in today’s South—a revival of interest in traditional Southern cooking is a sign of the South’s economic prosperity, as people have the time and resources to make good food preparation their personal vocation or to pay restaurants that specialize in Southern cooking to do it for them. Styles of Southern cooking with which my grandparents were familiar live on in the work of Bill Neal in Chapel Hill, Edna Lewis and Scott Peacock in Decatur, Robert Stehling in Charleston, and in the kitchens of thousands of other chefs who, trained in a wide range of cooking styles, have made the familiar Southern dishes into fine dining experiences. It also helps that we have the wealth and leisure to be concerned about pesticides and additives; organic food and traditional methods of Southern cooking fit together marvelously.

This is a cultural and technological transformation in which my family has also participated. My mother, Frances MacGregor Wall, worked for many years as a home demonstration agent, helping farm women improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their families by adopting new technologies like canning and preserving fresh food. From my childhood in Wadesboro, I remember the “freezer locker,” a business that enabled farmers and gardeners who did not own electric freezers to bring fresh food to town and store it in rental lockers until they needed to retrieve it. My mother dedicated her working life to the proposition that rural folks should be well-fed year-round. Her work reflected a larger social mandate that encouraged the modern supermarket and its capacity to transcend the seasons with its global reach of sources for food. Today, however, that same mandate also encourages the organic farm, which supports traditional and contemporary agricultural methods on the local and regional levels.

Later generations of my family have been part of broadening horizons and changing economic realities as well. Few of us today have any direct connection to the world of farming, although some of my cousins still live on the Anson County soil that my ancestors tilled. Others have literally roamed the world (one cousin started a tour company that for

years took North Carolinians to distant places) and found employment in a host of professions like timber harvesting and marketing, medicine, the ministry, teaching, and real estate. We are all members of a generation that lives in a much larger world than did our ancestors. At the Farmers Market, I recently learned that one of the regular dealers was on a ski trip with her children—a vacation which her grandparents, and mine, would never have dreamed of.

When I visit the Farmers Market, I see at once the ancient and universal rituals of the marketplace, the same rituals one can observe in Tokyo, London, Paris, or Venice as well as in Charlotte, Carrboro, Hillsborough, and dozens of other localities in North Carolina. Everywhere in our state, ages-old traditions continue. But there are also unmistakable signs of broad and pervasive changes, and I understand that I am contributing to some of those changes. My enjoyment of food is based both on childhood memories of Southern cooking and on my adult experiences with a variety of the world's cuisines. I am as eager to enjoy sushi or the foods of China, France, or Italy as I am to dine on collards and Carolina barbeque. My experiences, like the experiences of others who now make up the grand mix of North Carolina's population, draw me again and again, to the variety and the complexity, the tradition and the change, of the Farmers Market.



North Carolina Farmers Market, Raleigh. Raul Vaez restocks vegetables at Debra Lee's Produce stall. *Photo by John N. Wall, 2004.*



Above: Wayne Ingram, a retired state employee, offers free samples at the L&G Farm stall.

Below: Janice Eldridge sells gourds and pumpkins at Eldridge's Produce stall. She and her husband, Bobby, maintain their stall most of the year, but look for warmer quarters when the weather gets really cold. *Photos by John N. Wall, 2004.*





Above: Tammy King sells peaches in the summer for Pee Dee Orchards and apples in the fall for Deal Orchards. While some stalls at the Farmers Market are open year-round, most are open seasonally to sell products such as fruits or flowers, or, at other times, firewood and Christmas trees.

Below: Zang Lee sells flowers for Lee's Flower Farm. Like other flower vendors at the Farmers Market, she sets up shop in the summer and early autumn but gives up her space in the late fall to make room for Christmas tree dealers and wood sellers. *Photos by John N. Wall, 2004.*





Above: For over thirty years, Neal Thomas has been selling firewood and hand-made oak baskets. He is a master craftsman, splitting oak into thin strips and then weaving the strips into baskets of various sizes and designs.

Below: Diana Addaw (right) and Nigette Nedir sell apples and other fruit at the Sugarloaf Orchards and Farm stall. Diana, a native of Nigeria, has been working at the Market for over seven years. Her partner Nigette, a native of Morocco, has been working with her for the past five years. *Photos by John N. Wall, 2004.*





Above: Molly Allen has grown up helping her parents work in the Johnson's Farm stall.

Below: Juan Sotello Mundaza from Mexico cleans up at Debra Lee's stall. Juan makes it possible for Debra and her sister, Edna, to maintain their stall at the Market year-round. *Photos by John N. Wall, 2004.*



Coming Together at the North Carolina Table

A Sampling of Tar Heel Recipes and Stories*

~ by Foy Allen Edelman

*M*y eighty-two-year-old friend, Helen Cochrane, says my life has become an historical treasure hunt. For the last four years, I've been trying to bridge two centuries—the nineteenth and the twenty-first—by traveling to all 100 of North Carolina's counties, seeking out local cooks and recording their recipes and stories. With a North Carolina Department of Transportation road map as my guide, I set off to find adventure, meet exciting people, eat exotic foods, and search for culinary gems in out-of-the-way places.

Two faces from my own past stand out vividly: one face is that of my maternal grandmother, Lucy Purefoy Sawyer. My grandmother was born in Wake Forest in 1882. I called her "Mimmie." Much of my young life was spent like Mimmie's—playing outside, attending church, painting pictures, learning to play the piano and cook, going to the beach and reading books. Though sixty-eight years separated our births, we both grew up during segregation. Her father was an accountant; my father was a small town lawyer; her mother stayed home, as did my own. When Mimmie was young, the Purefoys employed an African-American cook and housekeeper. She worked full-time, except for Sunday evenings when she had the night off to be with her own family, and the Purefoys fixed their own supper.

When I was young, my family also employed an African-American cook, housekeeper, and nursemaid. Her name was Ida Mae Blount, and it is her face that stands out alongside my grandmother's. Ida Mae was part of our household from Monday through Friday, nine to five. I cried during the late summer when she left us to work in the local auction warehouses unloading cured bright leaf tobacco from dusty farm trucks. My mother cooked during the weekends and summers when Ida Mae was gone.

During the 1950s, food in Lenoir County was a source of abundance in a culture of scarcity. Preparing it, serving it, sharing it, was a big part of the lives of people in town, regardless of economic status. How

**This essay and the transcripts that follow are excerpted from a book-length manuscript in progress. Recorded versions of all of these interviews may be heard on the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.*

we ate, when we ate, and what we ate was all part of our collective cultural identity. If we were happy or sad; if we graduated, failed, married, lost a loved one; if we got a raise or just came home safely from school, food marked the occasion. Food was so important in the Kinston where I grew up that it seemed to be an unspoken language. Each meal and event was somehow a script that local people understood, and a quality of reverence imbued each occasion no matter how casual.

Our diet was typical of the Southern white middle class. It included beef, pork, and chicken, accompanied by seasonal vegetables and fruits. White rural families tended to eat larger breakfasts and more meat than African-American families, who typically used meat to flavor vegetables like collards, black-eyed peas, and turnip greens. Pork in the form of spare ribs and souse meat were popular dishes in the black community. Chicken was prepared in many forms, stewed, fried, baked or made into salad in African-American households that were often headed by women. One family matriarch scraped, or gleaned, corn at the end of the harvest. She removed the kernels from the cobs, then with her hands separated the good ones to cook. Bread in one form or another was a major component of everyone's diet: biscuits, corn bread, yeast rolls, or sliced loaf bread. And everyone enjoyed sweet, iced tea and cool artesian well water—pure, untreated, and fresh out of the earth.

For middle-class Kinstonians, Sunday and holiday dinners were more elaborate and lengthy than weekday dinners, and they concluded with rich desserts. Some weeks, twelve-layer chocolate cake was served; other times, lemon icebox or seasonal fruit pies were popular. In summer, strawberry short cake and homemade peach ice cream were favorites. Fudge brownies, fluffy coconut pies and layer cakes, pineapple



Ida Mae Blount and author, Foy Allen Edelman, c. 1953. *Photo courtesy of Foy Allen Edelman.*

upside-down cake, and buttery shortbread cookies were popular in the colder months. Special occasions required their own menus: vanilla ice cream was a birthday party staple. At bridal showers, we enjoyed delicate foods like colored butter mints, wedding cookies, and “nutty fingers,” a sort of pecan cookie shaped like a finger. We celebrated weddings sipping non-alcoholic punch from crystal or glass cups, toasting the happy couple with champagne, nibbling salted nuts and sharing a piece of white cake with white icing. Funerals demanded wholesome and simple dishes, such as hearty chicken casseroles and coconut layer cakes. Certain local cooks acquired a reputation for tasty, attractive, and consistent meals and were often called upon to cater these special events.

Family eating customs were not discussed or written down but were wholly accepted by all; they connected us to the seasons, to the natural world we lived in, and to each other. Cold foods, locally grown tomatoes, sliced chicken, potato salad, and slaw, were eaten in summer along with seafood. Almost everyone we knew went east to the beach in warm weather, to fish and crab. We cleaned, cooked, and ravenously consumed these succulent delicacies before the day’s end. Local folks prepared fish stews and oyster roasts during the coldest parts of winter. Specialties of spring were fresh fruit pies and cakes. My father and brothers fished and hunted in annual fall rituals learned from our ancestors. Ducks, Canada Geese, and doves gave our palates a taste for the untamed world of frigid, damp mornings and dangerous adventures attended with shotguns.

Gifts of food added zest to Christmas. Homemade fruitcakes, candied citrus peel, Russian tea, jars of colorful jams and jellies wrapped in white tissue paper and tied with ribbons lay among other presents underneath our tree. My great aunt Martha Barnes made my father a tin of “burnt” sugar caramel candy every Christmas. It was his favorite gift. Aunt Martha handwrote her recipes in a notebook she gave to me when I was eight. Her cookbook is one of the few material treasures that remain from my childhood. I use it to this day.

Storytelling was always the last “course” of extended family meals, especially on Sundays and holidays. For me, these storytelling sessions remain unequaled, even compared to today’s entertainment industry. Speaking many different varieties of Southern dialect, my parents, relatives, and friends sat at the dining room table for hours after the dishes were cleared away in a bonding ritual during which yarn after yarn was swapped. They told tales about their lives, their travels and adventures, and the people they had met. My mother narrated stories of her childhood in Windsor by the Cashee River. She later wrote a book, *Ginger Hill*, about her experiences. My father and my uncles told stories rang-

ing from hilariously funny accounts about play-acting with World War I swords when they were children to desperately sad ones about growing up in Kinston and Beaufort during the Great Depression and, later, their military service during World War II. Other relatives chimed in with their own unique histories. No novel I've ever read or movie I've ever seen was as entertaining or enriching to me as the stories that flowed around those dining room tables.

No matter where we met for dinner, whether mansion or farmhouse, beyond the dining room was the kitchen where I gathered with the women to chat about magic ways to transform dusty vegetables and leftover ham bones into rich soups, and hear new recipes for making toothsome delicacies like hot pepper jelly. We discussed menus for serving family dinners, birthday parties, luncheons, funerals, and social gatherings. The intimacy and tenderness of these recipe exchanges transcended many differences and spilled over into other discussions of secret desires, confidences, hurts, and questions that bound us together in deep ways. I thought that even racial differences seemed to diminish in the kitchen, at least for a little while. In those moments, I came to know and appreciate what I think of as the essence of each individual's special and unique personality.

While my grandmother and nursemaid lived entirely dissimilar lives, both had loved me. And I, in turn, was fascinated and enriched by them. Grandmother was born in a different century, lived a life of formal events where elegant and dainty foods were served, wrote poetry and told stories, like those about her father's experience fighting in the Civil War. Ida Mae, on the other hand, grew up on a small farm in my own county, ate collard greens and country ham, sang in her church's choir, was a member of another race with exciting and different customs, and told stories about African-American culture.

So it was with these recollections and this appreciation that I set out four years ago to fill up my treasure chest with the recipes and stories of other North Carolinians who share my love for preserving tradition and the richness of memories. I purchased some audio equipment and set out on what has become an amazing adventure.

My first visit was to Mecklenburg County to interview Essie Galliard, a woman my daughter, Harper Letonja, met at a Charlotte farmers market. Known to her friends as "Mom," Essie invited me to her small store, Mom's Carryout Kitchen, in an urban Charlotte neighborhood and allowed me to record her story. She was the first African-American teller at an NCNB bank in the late 1970s. She was so good at her job that she was promoted to manage ATM machines and



Essie "Mom" Galliard. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2002.*

received regular pay raises. But there was another calling that drew Mom away from the world of electronic transfers, deposits and withdrawals. Her dream was to open her own business. Eventually, she saved enough money, retired from NCNB, and purchased a small café. "I worked for the bank for eighteen years until servicing ATM machines became dangerous," said Mom. "I started wanting to own my own business This man wanted to sell his building Well, the only problem was I didn't

know how to cook!" She asked her 101-year-old mother-in-law (who is now 105), Mrs. Oralee Galliard—known as "Miss Peach"—to teach her. "I called her up one day," said Mom. "'You put in a pinch of this and a handful of that,' [Miss Peach] said. I wanted to start making sweet potato pies. She said to keep it simple but always to use fresh potatoes and just try different things because you might come up with your own thing that you like that will make it a little different from everybody else's. So I started using Carnation evaporated milk." Then Mom, her husband, Bill, and daughter, Angel, worked to perfect recipes for delicious pies and cakes. Her specialty is "Miss Peach's Sweet Potato Pie." She gave me the recipe as we sat in her café talking:

2 cups flour	1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup shortening	4 sweet potatoes
5 eggs	2 1/2 cups sugar
1/4 cup vanilla extract	2 sticks of margarine or butter
3 tablespoons nutmeg	1/2 can evaporated milk

Pie Crust: Use 2 cups of all purpose flour, 1 teaspoon of salt, 3/4 cup of shortening for an individual pie. Add enough ice water to pastry until you get desired consistency. Roll out and line pie dish.

Filling: Select orange sweet potatoes with smooth skin and no spots. Peel the potatoes, then cut into chunks and boil. Fill a mixing bowl full of the potatoes. Mash them together with eggs and sugar. When blend-

ed, add vanilla extract, softened margarine or butter, and nutmeg. When mixture is well blended, add a half can of either Carnation or Pet evaporated milk. Beat mixture until smooth before putting into crust. Bake pie at 325° for an hour or until crust is golden brown.

In addition to the recipe for sweet potato pie, Essie Galliard gave me the first gem for my culinary treasure chest: the gift of knowing her and her family. So far, over 170 cooks from every county in North Carolina and the Qualla Boundary have generously done the same, honoring me with their stories and recipes. It is my privilege to serve up a partial sampling of them here.

~ ~ ~

Roast Bear

Jenny and Jim Vance (Avery County)

[Jenny Vance was born in Avery County where she grew up in a family of thirteen children. She and her siblings earned extra money by skinning local cherry bark and drying it. The cured bark was sold to a medicine man from Tennessee named Joe McNeil. The children used the money to purchase a Stella guitar. Jenny and three siblings learned to play and when she and Jim Vance married in 1946, they formed High Country Grass, a bluegrass and country string band. Jenny played guitar and bass. Jim performed on many instruments, including mandolin and harp. During the late 1960s, High Country Grass traveled to Viet Nam and performed forty-three shows in combat zones for U.S. troops. The band also toured Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho for several years before Jenny and Jim decided to settle down and start a family. Soon after, they assembled a group of friends for a barn raising. The result is the rustic Music Barn, where they still perform in Crossnore each Saturday night. The following interview was recorded in Crossnore, North Carolina, November 15, 2002. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

Jenny: My name's Jenny Vance and I live in Crossnore.

Jim: Well, M'am, my grandmother, she was born in Cherokee County, Cherokee, in eighteen and forty and she was Cherokee, but my mother and dad was raised here.

Jenny: I'm seventy-four years old and Jim's seventy-nine. And we like to go bear hunting up in Avery County.

Jim: We was raised here and that was our thing in the fall of the year, in the winter, was to take our vacation. After we got our work done, we hunted.



Avery County bear hunters: Jim and Jenny Vance; daughter, Diane (standing); and granddaughter, Stella. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2002.*

Jenny: And we get a whole lot of people together along with our dogs and we head out to the mountains in the hopes of finding a bear track. And if we're lucky enough to kill one, we usually do what the old timers say, we field dress it. We take all the entrails out of it and then when we get home, we turn the water hose on it and wash it out real good, skin it. A lot of times, we, oh, just cut it up and give each hunter a portion of meat. But if we're close enough to somewhere that they'll process it, we take it and have it processed and wrapped and put in the freezer. And, oh boy, how good that is when you get home and you get a big old roast out of that bear.

Jim: I like the roast myself. They always fixed it like that. Sure did!

Jenny: We like to take ours and soak it a little in vinegar water overnight for a roast. Then we'll put it in the oven. And, of course, you've got all of the fat trimmed off the bear meat. Bear fat is really not good. You like to trim off all the fat. Then we put the roast, after we've soaked it overnight, in a little soda and vinegar water. You wash that off and then you put it in the roasting pan just like you would any other roast. But bear meat is dry. So we like to put, oh, salt and pepper to taste and if you like garlic, a little garlic salt would be fine. Cover it pretty much with bacon strips, because that keeps it from drying out. Of course, we're going to have water in the bottom of the roasting pan. Probably a half an hour to each pound of meat would do it but you can

always test it and see if it's well done. And if it's getting too dry on the top, always put a piece of aluminum foil over it and just tent it, so it does not dry out. You don't want it to be dry.

Then, I do not like to make gravy out of the bear drippings. I usually make my own gravy to go on the top of it. When we do bear meat we like to use butter as much as possible, so we would just make a good butter gravy to go with this. It's really, really good eating.

I've been in on many, many, many bear chases. We always taught our children as they were growing up, we taught 'em gun safety. We had two boys and a girl. And for their vacation, if they made good grades in school, they could always get out one week out of the year to go bear hunting. My son has killed about forty bear and my daughter has killed four. And my granddaughter has killed three and she's only twelve years old. And I'll let Jim tell you how many he's killed. They call him the "Grandpappy" of all the bear hunters.

Jim: OK, I'm the only one. I'm Grandpa. I've killed ninety-seven. I've killed every one of 'em a-following my dogs, with the exception of one. And we turned on it, we run it about an hour and forty-five minutes, and it came out the same place it went in, and I killed it. But outside of that I killed all of 'em a-following my dogs from Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia, North Carolina.

Jenny: When you're bear hunting, you like to line all the men up on what we call stands. That's the places you would think that the bear would be coming out if the dogs don't tree it. You don't get scared or you don't get excited until it's all over and then you look back and say, "ooh, I did that or how did I do that?"

Jim: I've never been real scared but the closest I ever come was down on the coast. I shot one one night about eleven o'clock, and it was coming straight to me. I emptied a 30/30 in it and it didn't even knock it down. So I put another shell in my gun and I stuck it against his neck and shot 'im. He fell right on my legs and on my feet, sure did.

Jenny: When we go on a bear hunt and take several people with us like we're going to stay a week at a place and hunt, we have a trial when we come in in the evening. If anybody has shot at a bear and they missed it, they get their coattail or their shirttail cut off. A lot of times, the old judge of our hunters, he will make up something and try 'em for it and get to cut their shirttail off. If somebody shoots at a bear and they miss it, whoa, they get their shirttail cut off and a lot of times if they've got on a new shirt or a new coat, they don't pay no attention to that. They just start cutting it. You get your shirttail, your coattail and all cut off if you shoot at a bear and miss it. And one time we had this guy and he

was a city slicker and he come to hunt with us and he had on the most beautiful leather jacket that you have ever seen and a beautiful, beautiful shirt that we would never wore a-hunting but a city slicker didn't know the difference. And when we had the trial that night, he kept a-looking around and a-looking around and he had shot at a bear with a pistol. Of all the crazy things, he was hunting with a pistol. And it come time for us to have the trial that night, and they got up and they cut that beautiful jacket, leather jacket. They cut his beautiful shirt, big, red, beautiful shirt, wool shirt just like anybody else's shirt, if they got it at Wal-mart. We thought that he'd be mad about it but that tickled that man to death that he was in on the hunt and got his coattail and shirttail cut off.

You'd turn the dogs lose and then if you didn't kill the bear that day, you would camp out during the night. We didn't have any walkie-talkie radios or anything and we would camp out. And then the next morning, you'd turn the dogs back loose again and you would hunt the bear until you got him. Now they have walkie-talkie radios.

Jim: The walkie-talkie saves your bear, though. If people get on a-talking, and the bear, they're sensitive, they can hear, and that will turn 'em. They'll go the other way.

Jenny: But back when we first started, you had signals. You would blow your huntin' horn. One time would mean, hey, the bear's going down the river, or if you blow'd the huntin' horn two times, it would mean the bear is going up the river. So all the standers would know which way to go in order to line up to try to kill the bear.

Yancey County Reunion

Levi Wilson and his sister, Hattie Wilson

[My statewide quest to find cooks included a list of "must have" recipes, including bean bread, collards, biscuits, corn whiskey, and apple stack cake, made only in the western counties, as far as I could tell. Finding a baker familiar with the recipe for apple stack cake eluded me until I was introduced to Charity Ray, an employee of Mars Hill College in Madison County. In the fall of 2003, Charity invited me to spend a pleasant Sunday afternoon with her and her sister, Dorothy, at their family home, where we could see the Blue Ridge Parkway from the kitchen window. While we talked, they mentioned that they attend several family reunions each fall. One of the largest takes place in September in the Bald Creek community of Yancey County. "Oh, people come from Ohio, Tennessee and Maryland, even Texas," Charity said. "We start with a dedication, then have some prayers and a big covered-dish dinner." Why does the Wilson family come from so far and go to so much trouble? They're all proud of being descended from three emancipated

slaves who are buried in a cemetery not far from the mountain farm that was the Wilson family home during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lucinda Wilson, born a slave in 1843, died free during the flu pandemic in 1917, and is buried there.

She gave land to the county so that a school could be built and local children would no longer have to leave the picturesque valley in order to comply with truancy laws. The family welcomed me to their reunion with enthusiasm and a delicious picnic. In 2003, I had the pleasure of attending their reunion and had the opportunity to interview



Hattie Wilson. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.

Mr. Levi Wilson and his sister, Miss Hattie. They remember life in the early twentieth century, when just about everybody cooked but no one in the family used written instructions. All the recipes were in their heads, and they measured ingredients with their hands. The following interview was recorded in Yancey County in 2003. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

Levi: We are some of the bunch. I was born in nineteen and six [1906].

Hattie: Nineteen and seven [1907].

Levi: I tell you, most of the people back in my days, they know'd how to cook. They didn't measure the stuff with things like that, they just took their hands, they measured but they measured with the hand and they dipped the hand in there and get so much out.

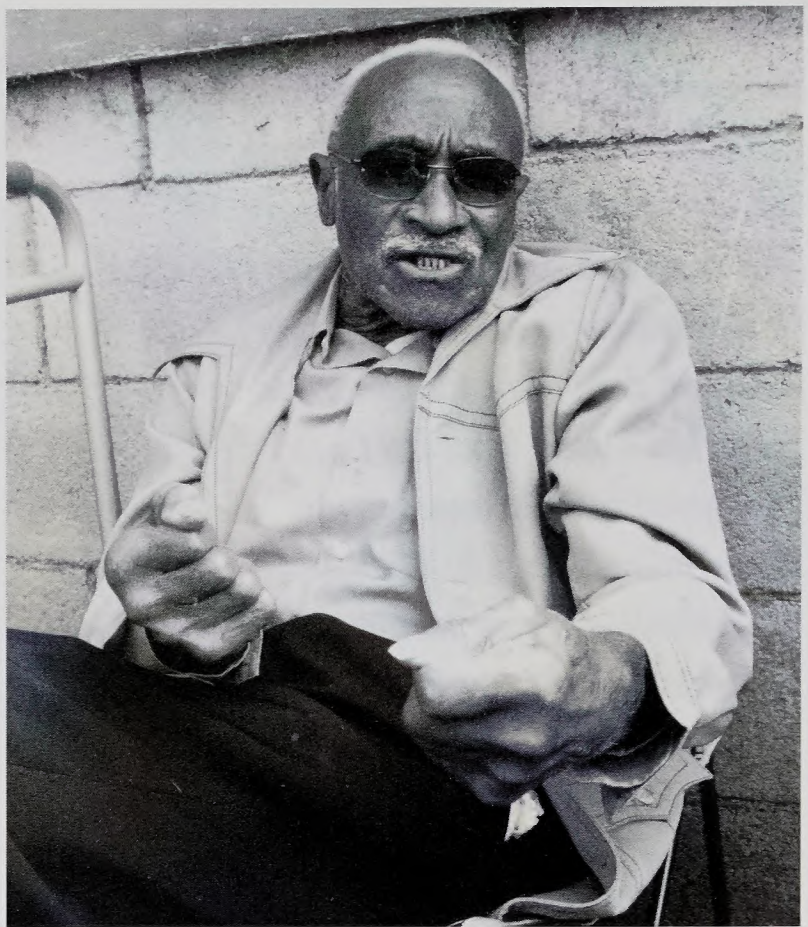
We raised most of the stuff we used. Chickens, eggs, and things of that kind and we didn't have like they do now, you see? We might have corn bread for breakfast, as far as that goes. We eat what we raised, and we raised what we had to eat, you might say, and the only thing we bought mostly was coffee and sugar.

We here just coming back to the old home place, homecoming, getting together. We been coming back here every year, some of the family. We moved over here on account of school. But some of the family most of the time, some of the family from Ohio, down here at Spruce Pine

and Burnsville, they generally come, but they're not here this year. They're not here today.

But Grandmother [Lucinda Wilson, 1843-1917] was buried up in the white cemetery up there. Every year some of us goes up to the cemetery up here. Because that's where she was buried at. I remember her very well because she was a . . .

Hattie: She was a midwife, midwife for the black people.



Levi Wilson. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.

Levi: She had long hair. She could sit down on it. And it was gray. And somebody would go up there and comb her hair often. They liked to comb her hair because her hair was so long she could set on it. She could set on it! And she would knit and make clothes and things like that, sweaters, and jackets and things like that. They called it a carder, or something or other, she made the wool, took the sheep wool and she made thread out of it. She first wound it on a big wheel and made her thread out of it. And then she knitted it together and made sweaters and jackets, and things like that out of it. She could tell you a whole lot about slavery and everything like that. And some people was good to the slaves, and some wasn't. But she know'd the ones that was good and the others. That was before the First war, you see.

Them times, now we all lived pretty close together at that time. And we lived in houses that looked like, well, they looked like you couldn't stay in 'em in a way, ya see, but we never was sick nor nothing like that, but when the snow would blow, that old wooden shingles made of it, boards. I've made boards myself. They called it a floor. They made it and made the boards out of a certain wood and covered the house with it. They call it shingles now but they called it boards then, about that long. And they could nail 'em up on the house and the water wouldn't run in but if the snow come on there and the wind blowed, it blowed it back through that house, maybe on to your bed. Sometime you'd get up when it come a-snowing and the wind blowed, your bed would be covered with snow the next morning.

But we stayed safe and some of the houses we'd live in, the chickens would go under the floor and you could see the chickens through under the floor. They'd come in and lay eggs on the bed! And the most of the people at them times, it wasn't just only the colored people but the white too, some of them was poor too, you see, and some had to live just like we did. They had a cat hole. Nearabout everybody had a cat.

Grandma Laura's Chocolate Cake

Margaret King (Moore County)

[I interviewed Margaret King in late 2002, but I met her so long ago that I can hardly remember the time I didn't know her. Though she grew up in Moore County, the Wilde family from Kinston (where I grew up) employed her during the 1960s. Margaret became locally famous for cooking many scrumptious dishes, including a thick, fudge-like chocolate cake that she learned to make at the hands of her grandmother, Laura Johnson. When Margaret was a child, her grandmother gleaned for corn and peas in local fields after the fall harvest. Mrs. Johnson removed kernels from the corncobs, and then used her fingers to separate the kernels that would be edible. "Grandma Laura put the shells of the field peas in a pillow case and thrashed (beat) them until they opened," says Margaret, "then she removed the broken shells by sifting them through cheesecloth before she cooked them and put them in jars. She didn't have no freezer back then; she canned anything she could. When a hen stopped laying, she killed, cleaned and cooked it before putting it up in canning jars that she'd make into chicken and pastry in the winter." In the summer, Laura cooked in Kitty Hawk at the Journey Inn Motel and Restaurant. "She could cook anything from possum to lobster," Margaret says emphatically. She described the process of reproducing her grandmother's chocolate cake in the following interview that was recorded in Moore County in 2002. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

My name is Margaret King from Vass, and my recipe is Grandma Laura's Chocolate Cake. Whoever would be there when she finished making the cake got a chance to lick the bowl, so me and my two cousins, we waited 'till she got through so we could lick the bowl. So we'd watched what she was doing, and I could make the cake. I was born in her house and I lived there until I was nine years old, in the same house that I was born in.

She worked at different houses taking care of people. And sometimes when she come home she'd bring different things they'd give her. One time she came home she had some Hershey's cocoa. We was about

five, 'cause I remember going to the one room schoolhouse in Vass. And Grandma dipped snuff. And she always had a toothbrush and snuff in a can. So, when she would go to work, we would get the Hershey's cocoa and put it in the snuff box, put some sugar in it, and we would walk around like we were dipping, put the stick in the snuff box, put it in our mouth, and walk around, and we would spit and act like she did while she was gone to work. But she soon found out that we was stealing the cocoa and eatin' up the sugar, 'cause we didn't get much sugar back in that time. We didn't have a whole lot of sugar to be wasted. She saved it for Saturday and Sunday, when she made us cakes.

Nearabout every Saturday night she would make us a chocolate cake. She would kill some chickens. We'd have chicken, have apples, she made homemade apple pie. But the best thing she made for us was chocolate cake.

Even now I can't hardly remember the recipe, because she didn't have a recipe. She just would take some eggs. She always had chickens, so she traded some eggs for some butter from a lady down the road. She would just make us the best cake. Flour and sugar and vanilla. She didn't have a mixer 'cause she would mix the cake up with her hand and a spoon, a big old wooden spoon. She would mix the cake up, she would



Margaret King. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2002.*

beat the eggs and sugar till it was so creamy you could take the spoon and flop it back down in the bowl. And then she would get the cake all made up and she would bake like two or three layers.

It was a yellow cake 'cause she didn't have nothing to go in it to make it turn colors. It was just plain flour, self-rising flour, I do remember that, self-rising flour, sugar, and butter and vanilla. She got

the vanilla from the Watkins Man* when he would go by in the neighborhood and he would sell things like cake flavoring, and hair grease and soap and stuff like that. And she would buy vanilla from the Watkins Man when he came through the neighborhood. So, we didn't have color in the cake. And then we didn't have powdered sugar. She would take granulated sugar and she would cook it in the pot with the Hershey's cocoa and the vanilla, and she kept cooking it and cooking it until it was like a thick, what you might call it sauce now, the chocolate. After the cake got done, she would take the bottom of the wooden spoon and poke holes in the bottom layer, she poured chocolate all through them, and it would go all down inside of it. Then she would do it until she got to the top and then she would cover it all up so you couldn't see the holes until you cut down into the cake, and you could see that chocolate between all those layers all the way down to the bottom.

When I make chocolate now, if I heat the powdered sugar and the butter and the milk it'll be soft, kinda like a fudge. I use about two and a half cups of self-rising flour and I use two sticks of butter. But back then Grandmother, I didn't know what kind, how much she used because she just put some in until it looked right. I use a teaspoon of vanilla. And I cream my sugar and eggs together, now, with the vanilla and a half of cup of water. I just add a little bit of flour, a little bit of flour, until I use up all my two and a half cups. If it's too thick, I'll add a little bit more water, but not too much, until I make the cake. Don't taste as good as Grandmamma's, but it's the same recipe what I revived from when I was a child that she used to make.

While the cake's in the oven you start with your sugar. I use 10x powdered sugar. Sometimes I use a half a cup, according to how I want the cake, half cup of cocoa, just cocoa, still using Hershey's cocoa, and a teaspoon of vanilla and a stick of butter, not margarine—butter. I still do that now. And then I, you can mix it up cold now in a mixer now without heating it, but I heat it so I can pour it down through the layers like my grandma did. I take the back of my wooden spoon and I poke about five or six holes in it and I smear it all down so the cake will be warm and it will go all down through the warm cake. I get another layer and it goes down through the warm cake. I'm going to have to make it for you. [laughter] I'll make it and let you taste it!

*The "Watkins Man" was a traveling merchant for the J.R. Watkins Medical Company who went door-to-door in rural communities, selling a variety of household items like hair tonic, dyes, and food flavorings.

Mam-maw Zim's Chest Pie

Nolie Ridenour Zimmerman

and Betty Zimmerman (Rowan County)

[When Christine Mallinson, a graduate student studying socio-linguistics at North Carolina State University, heard I was searching for cooks from Rowan County, she suggested that I contact Brenda Zimmerman, an accomplished cook who subsequently introduced me to rich German pastries, including Fashnachts. Also called Tanglebritches, Fashnachts are prepared on Shrove Tuesday in the Moravian tradition to mark the beginning of Lent. Brenda is also the Activity Director of the Lutheran Home at Trinity Oaks in Salisbury. In early June 2004, she arranged for me to meet several residents at Trinity Oaks who shared recipes with me. Among them was Mary Deal who gave me an exotic recipe for Polynesian Chicken Salad that she obtained in Hawaii during World War II when her husband was a carpenter for the military and worked aboard the U.S.S. Missouri to install the plaque that marked the signing of the peace treaty ending the war in the Pacific. Then Brenda took me out "to the country" to meet Betty Zimmerman and mother-in-law, Nolie Zimmerman, a spunky one hundred and four-year-old who held court on her back porch seated in her husband's old barber chair. Known to her friends as "Mam-maw Zim," she generously shared her method for preparing chest pie (named for being stored in a pie chest) that she purloined by eavesdropping on the local party telephone line in 1925. She remembered all the ingredients and the names of her neighbors who unknowingly provided the recipe! The following interview was recorded in June 2004, in Salisbury. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

Nolie: Nolie Ridenour Zimmerman, Rowan County. I was born October 6, 1899, right across the street over there in that two-story white house. I lived over there in Salisbury for couple of years, then when we built this house, moved back to the country. I love to sit out here on the porch. It's nice and cool.

Chest Pie. Now that's a good pie. You take three eggs, beaten, real good, and then you take one cup of white sugar and one cup of brown sugar and beat that in there good. Then put a stick of butter in it, and stir all that up good. And what is it, a teaspoonful of vanilla? I always use four tablespoons, either coffee cream or bought milk. Stir it up good and that makes two pies.

Betty: 350° for ten minutes, turn down to 300° for twenty minutes or until done.

Nolie: It's according to how your stove [cooks]. Everybody's stove don't think alike, and mine don't think too fast. Well, anyhow, you know how to bake a pie, just bake it 'til it gets done. [laughter]

Betty: And you'll think they're going to run over, and they'll rise way up, you know, and they're pretty and brown, oh, they're pretty and brown. And she has used that ever since I have been in the family.

Nolie: It's pretty old.

Betty: And I come in in '53.

Nolie: I caught that on the telephone. [laughter] But that was when we first moved to the country when

we had them old telephones [that] went on the wall, you know? And there used to be eight or ten on our line. And you wouldn't know if anybody was talking unless you picked up the ear piece. So, one Saturday morning, I was goin' to call somebody for something and I picked up the telephone and Mrs. Limley, lived down the road down here and her mother lived over to Salisbury, and she said, "Mama, I was wantin' to talk to you just a few minutes." And I thought, "Well, I'll see what them few minutes is!" [laughter] She said, "I want to know how to bake a chest pie." Well, then I *did* want to hear it. [laughter] So, she told that recipe! [laughter] That's a good way to get a recipe, ain't it? But I did, I thought, "Well now I want to see what that recipe's going to be."

I had made chest pies, but not like that, and not good like that 'cause I didn't know how to make chest pies. I went and made me some crusties while it was fresh on my mind, and I baked me a chest pie! [laughter] That was so good! I didn't mean to eavesdrop! I picked up the receiver to see if anybody was talkin' and not ringing. You had to ring a bell. Turn that handle, you know, and to get Salisbury to answer but we had about ten on the line, and you didn't know whether they was talkin' or not unless you picked the receiver up, and if wasn't nobody on there you



Nolie "Mam-maw" Ridenour Zimmerman.

Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.

could use it. If there was, you could sit there and listen like I did. . . . Oh, it makes my belly hurt! [laughter]

But anyhow that was a good recipe. So she said, “Well, Mother, that’s all I wanted. I just wanted you to tell me how to make a chest pie.” Oh me, me, me, me!

Neuse River Shrimp Stew

Wilbur King (Lenoir County)

[Wilbur King is well-known in the Kinston area, because just about everybody has eaten at the restaurant his family has owned and operated for nearly sixty years. Known simply as “Kings,” the barbecue, chicken, and seafood establishment is also a favorite way station for “upstate” families traveling to and from the coast. Kings is situated on an historically important meeting place: both Confederate and Union armies crossed the property at the conclusion of a major battle at nearby Wyse Fork in March of 1865. The King family has a long history in Lenoir County. R.W. King, Wilbur King’s great, great grandfather, operated a general store and livery stable, and was mayor of Kinston during the 1850s. His grandfather, Frank King, opened a service station in 1936. In 1946, Wilbur’s father began serving food at the station, which is now the site of Kings Restaurant. Wilbur King’s maternal roots in Lenoir County are equally deep. His great, great grandfather, John P. Miller, was a 1st Sergeant in the Confederate 66th North Carolina Infantry. He fought during the entire Civil War in and around Kinston, Jones County, Wilmington, Weldon, and Plymouth. Miller returned to Kinston after the war and fathered a son, Franklin Xavier Miller. A year later, John Miller was hanged and his wife was shot during the anarchy that followed the war. One-year-old Franklin, however, was hidden under a bed and survived. The following interview with Wilbur King was recorded in Kinston in 2004. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal’s website: www.2.chass.edu/NCFJ.]

My name is Wilbur King. I’m from Lenoir County. And I want to talk about my memories of catching seafood and cooking seafood on the Neuse River, when I was a kid growing up. We had what we called “the camp” on the Neuse River down below Cherry Point. And it was kind of a ramshackle type place, just something to get out of the rain more than anything else. It was an old mobile home, and my dad built a huge porch on the front. And I had an uncle who was in the military, and he confiscated a bunch of cots from the military base.

And we’d go sometimes, and there’d be as many as twenty or twenty-five people and everybody would sleep on cots. If it was nice, we’d



Wilbur King, with his wife, Carolyn, and mother, Margaret, personally welcome diners in Kings Restaurant, Kinston, NC. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.*

take a blanket out and sleep on the beach, you know, and watch the shooting stars and that sort of thing. My dad had an old boat and a shrimp net. At dark or a little after dark, two or three of the men would get on the boat and they would crank the motor and go out. And you couldn't see 'em but you could hear the motor going "ummmmm." And they were pulling that shrimp net. And after they had pulled it for awhile, they would start back into the bank and they would yell out so that everybody'd know they were coming. So we'd all run down to the beach and they would beach the boat up on the sand. And everybody would grab the ropes and pull the net in so the seafood wouldn't escape. And there was always fish and shrimp and crabs, all kinds of fish. And then we'd separate all the seafood. And then we'd go back up to the camp.

And my mother, I remember, she would always make a big pan of tossed salad. And it was like sometimes there were so many people there it would be like a washtub full, and I remember how crispy and crunchy the lettuce always was. The tomatoes were always garden tomatoes, you know. You could make a meal on the salad! [laughter]

When we cleaned the seafood, we—I mean "they," the adults—we would have fish that were fried with the french fries to go with them, and then we would have shrimp that were fried, and normally a shrimp stew which you prepare like a fish stew. And then the soft shell crabs that came out would be fried and the hard shell crabs would be a crab stew.

And I remember eating shrimp stew and crab stew until you'd just feel like you're going explode but it's so good you can't stop! And I remember all the adults together, my mom and dad and my uncles or whoever happened to be there, you know, and the recipe my daddy used for shrimp and fish stew is the one I still use.

Start out by frying out bacon in the bottom of the pot. And that serves two purposes, of course—one, it greases the pot so the stew doesn't stick and, secondly, it certainly adds a flavor to the stew. And then he would always take his spoon, and after the bacon had fried out, would drain the grease, and leave it in the pot, but take the bacon out and spread it on a paper towel. And that's what we had for *hors d'oeuvres*! [laughter] Everybody would fight over it. And do you know, I still do that. And my children, when they were at home experienced that same thing 'cause they always waited for the bacon to come out of the pot, you know. And then put in water, condensed tomato soup, salt and pepper, sliced potatoes and onions, and just boil it until the potatoes and onions are tender. And then add the shrimp or the fish or whatever—eggs, corn meal dumplings and that sort of thing.

But I remember especially, I was always too lazy to eat fish stew when the fish had bones, and I was too lazy to enjoy the crab stew, because it was so hard to pick the crab meat. So, the shrimp stew was always my favorite. And it still is. I prefer a shrimp stew over anything else. But crab stew is just really, really good if you're willing to take the time to break the claws and pick out the meat and that sort of thing. I think it's better than the other two, really.

But we always were able to go, and back then in the mid-fifties, the seafood was so abundant as compared to now. We would just take a crab net, and walk down the bank and just scoop up the crabs, just chase them down and scoop them up, and now you've got to have bait and a trap. Everything's been overfished to the point now that it's not anything like it was then. We used to just stand on the bank, take a cane pole like you go fresh water fishing with, and a little hook and shrimp and just wade out into the water, waist-deep and just do it like that and just stand there and catch croakers all day long. And now you can't find a croaker in the Neuse River to save your life, you know. But things have certainly changed so much since then, with that area being overfished and abused.

We were always encouraged to bring all the friends we wanted to so we always had people to do things with. I have very fond memories. My dad bought me a boat and motor when I was eleven years old, and I've had a boat and motor since I was eleven years old. I learned to water ski there. I smoked my first cigarette there. I drank my first beer there. I

kissed my first girl there. [laughter] Just a lot of good memories of that place and that time. I remember it just like it was yesterday. Yes, so very lucky, I was!

Collards and Leftover Dumplings

Barbara Roberson (Beaufort County)

[In early 2001 my neighbor, Donna Matthews Saad, and I watched as out-of-state cars crowded into the yard across the street filled with friends and relations in town to attend the funeral of Barbara Roberson's husband. Donna and I decided to help the bereaved family and we agreed to provide a meal of roast turkey, gravy, rice, green beans, and pound cake. As fate would have it, Barbara soon reciprocated, crossing the street to my home with roast pork, corn, and peanut butter pie to comfort me after my father's death. These acts of compassion—expressed with food—led to a lasting friendship between Barbara and me. Not surprisingly, much of this friendship is spent in her kitchen or mine. Barbara Everett Roberson grew up in Beaufort County where she and sisters Norma, Katherine, and Hilda are all well-known in their communities for their bountiful tables and country cooking. As the locals say, when Barbara cooks she really “puts her foot in it,” meaning, of course, “it’s really good!” This is especially true when winter comes and she cooks her mother’s recipes for collards and cornmeal dumplings. Other family favorites are angel biscuits and sweet potato pie. Barbara shared some of her culinary secrets with me in the following interview that was recorded in Florence, South Carolina, in 2002. To listen to the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal’s website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ/.]

My name is Barbara Roberson, the former Barbara Anne Everett, born and raised in Washington, North Carolina—better known as “Little Washington”—and that’s in Beaufort County in the eastern part of the state. I’m going to talk about collards. I ate collards as far back as I can remember. And my mother was an excellent cook, and nobody could cook collards like my mother. And I never really tried to cook them for my family, as long as I could get them at my mother’s house. But there came a time when Mother just couldn’t cook them for us anymore, and I had to learn how to do it. And I tried and I would eat them and I would be disappointed.

And so finally I said, “Mother, tell me how come your collards are so much better than mine? Mine just don’t taste like yours. *How* do you do it?” And she said, “Barbara, you can’t over season collards. They have to be seasoned right.” And by that she meant the broth that they’re cooked in or the meat or the ham bone or the piece of country ham or

the bacon grease. And back when I was growing up, you didn't worry about bacon grease. I mean we saved bacon grease to fry corn bread and to fry fish and to fry whatever you wanted to fry! And, of course, it was delicious. We don't do that so much anymore, and we all know why. But anyhow, finally, I can honestly say I think they're just as good as my mother's, or *almost* as good.

First of all, you've got to have some good collards. If you buy your collards in a grocery store, then I would say buy little tender ones. It's better if you can buy them from somebody who has a collard patch. And that's what I have done for the past few years when I lived in Garner. There was a man my husband had discovered and knew, and he had this collard patch. He had learned to cook collards from his daddy, so this went way back. He had raised collards for many, many years. So we would get his collards. My husband would go get them. I would go to the store and get three or four ham hocks, depending on how many collards you're going to cook. And usually I had a ham bone in the freezer or some broth from a honey-baked ham that I had. We would eat the ham and always save the bone, then I would cook the bone and get this delicious broth from it. You could mix those different meats. If you had a piece of country ham, you could throw that in there. Anyhow, you cook the ham hock. If you just had ham hock, that's okay too, and you cook it until it just falls apart, just falls off the bone. And then you want to take the skin out and the fat. And there's some lean meat in there that is pretty darn good, so I would save that and mix that in with the collards when they're done.

So you got your broth, you may have to add a little water to it, the broth doesn't have to cover all of the collards because when you put the raw collards in there, and once they start wilting, they cook down, you know they just get smaller and smaller. So, you want to start out with a



Barbara Roberson. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.*

pretty good pile. But what I do is take each leaf of the collard and look at it back and front for insects. And I do that no matter how many collards I have, I look at every leaf back and front and I know that when I bite into those cooked collards, that they're clean. So, then I take several collard leaves and I'll take a knife and just cut them up. Go ahead and cut them before you cook them. I didn't used to do that, but I found it works real well. They fit in the pot better. So I just slice them up and press it down in the broth.

You may want to put maybe a teaspoon, no more than that, of sugar in there. Sometimes collards can be a little bitter. You may want to try them first, but it probably wouldn't hurt to put a little bit of sugar in there. And you'll probably have to salt them some more and [add] some pepper.

You just cook the collards and keep checking them until you stick your fork in them and they're nice and tender. And when I think they're done, you just get a little saucer or a little bowl and take you out a nice serving and cut it up some more if it needs it and taste of it. If it needs a little more seasoning, if you've got some bacon grease and you want to put a tablespoon in there, it gives the collards a shiny look. And, oh man! They'll just make your mouth water!

And so, when you get them tasting just like you want them to taste, and they're nice and tender, just take them up with a slotted spoon, drain the pot liquor off of them, then you can serve them plain just like they are or a lot of people like hot pepper vinegar on them. Some people use different kinds of relishes. But I just like the plain old collards myself. If they're seasoned right, they don't need anything else on them.

Another thing that Mother did and I did for a long time for my children, I have four children, and they all love collards, and their husbands love collards, and even the two sons-in-law that are Yankees love collards. You know, they've got to be pretty good for a Yankee to love collards! But anyhow, we would put potatoes in there and sort of put them towards the last half of the cooking.

And the last fifteen minutes if you like them, something my mother always did and we liked, was corn meal dumplings. It's nothing in the world but corn meal and water and salt. And you want to use hot water and you want to let it set for a little while, just a few minutes, because it'll thicken. And then you want it just the right consistency to kind of roll it up in your hand like you're making a biscuit and then patting it out, not too thick. The small ones are nice, I think. And drop them carefully on top of the collards and let them cook about the last fifteen minutes of the cooking time. So you just take those out, and you can put those in your pot liquor after you cook your collards if you want to, or you can

just lay them on top of your collards and let them cook. You take them out first and then take your collards. Of course, people do things their own way and different ways, and whatever works for you.

Let me give you one more little hint that I especially like. I like the leftover dumplings because after they're cold the next day, you take those dumplings and slice them like you're slicing a hamburger bun, and you put them in a frying pan. I would have used bacon grease years ago but today I would use a little cooking oil and brown it, crisp, like corn bread. And if you have any leftover collards and you've got those fried leftover dumplings, *you just can't beat it!* It's just so good, I just can't tell you how good it is. My mouth is just watering just sitting here talking about it. But that's how I cook collards. I hope you'll try it and I hope you'll enjoy it. Thank you so much!

Qualla Boundary Stack Pie

*Lula Owl with daughter, Laura Blankenship,
and grandson, Cory Blankenship (Yellowhill township)*

[Traditional Native American diets in western North Carolina often include beans, corn and wild greens like creasies (wild watercress) and poke sallet (poke-weed) prepared without dairy products, as is common in the coastal counties in the eastern part of our state. Animal fat is used to season foods like bean bread and boiled cabbage. Corn was central to the Native American diet before colonization and continues to be celebrated annually with the Green Corn Dance. Hominy used to be made at home by boiling corn in clean ashes; this causes the soft white interior of the kernel to swell and crack off the yellow shell. This process also enriches the protein content in the resulting white pod. A popular dessert is made from sweetened hominy, beans, and chestnuts. The following interview was facilitated by Cory Blankenship, a student at North Carolina State University. Recently, Cory invited me to visit his home in Big Cove on the Qualla Boundary (also called the Cherokee Reservation) along the western border of North Carolina and Tennessee. There I met his extended family: his grandmother, Laurie Blankenship, and great-grandmother, Lula Owl. The interview was recorded April 7, 2005, in Cherokee, North Carolina. To listen to the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

Lula: [I am] Lula Owl. I was born down there on the main road [in Cherokee] the twenty-first day of March, 1919.

Foy Allen Edelman: Do you by any chance remember your grandmother?

Lula: Rachel Reid [was my grandmother]. Well, she was real strict, and she went barefooted most of the time. They wore red handkerchiefs

on their head back then and they wore a clean apron when they went anywhere. It wasn't just one you wore around and cooked. They'd put a clean apron on to wear when they went out, to Cherokee or wherever.

She cooked on the fireplace. They loved sweet potatoes, baked sweet potatoes or cornbread. They'd get a cast iron pot with a lid. And you put your cornbread in there and put it over a set of coals, hot coals, put the lid on there and then you had a thing that took the lid off. And that's the way you baked your cornbread, just on the fire on a bunch of coals. Or you cooked your beans and stuff on the fireplace back then. Nowadays, it's pinto beans. I think back then it was more October bean.

We ate wild meat, like squirrel and rabbits and ground hogs and possum and all that. That's the only kind of meat that we had. You boil it, after it's skinned, of course, the squirrels and possums and groundhogs, you skin them. And then you cut them up and boil them, and put them in a roasting pan or something. You really put hot pepper [on them]. It takes the wild taste out or you can go out here and get spice wood to put in. And that'll take out the wild flavor. It blooms yellow. And that makes tea if you didn't have coffee or nothing back then. You used it for tea. You didn't go out to the store back then to buy stuff. You just had to depend on the mountains and the berries and stuff. You ate a lot of wild mushrooms, wild greens, sochanie, and poke and creasies and branch lettuce, bean salad that grows up in the mountains.* You had to go to the mountains to get a lot of your food.

They made a long time ago a lot of stack pies with apples. We dried a lot of apples. We had our own apples back then. Today nobody has their own apples. You dried them. You put them out on a clean sheet, a white cloth on a little stand outside and dry them and you take them in every night and take them back out every morning and then you stacked them up and then you cooked them in the winter time and made like wheat bread, biscuit bread. You put a layer of biscuit bread and then a layer of apples, cooked apples on there and we called it "stack pie."

Made gravy. We used a lot of tomato gravy, water gravy, cornmeal gravy. We had cornmeal gravy, water gravy. If you didn't have milk, you used water.

The thing is, we stayed in boarding schools. They had a farm and we had a lot of beans, I guess, pinto beans and they'd have these big old steam pots and they'd cook food in them. I remember breakfast now, a big old pan about this big of scrambled eggs. But we stayed hungry, it seemed like most of the time. We just ate twice a day.

* *Sochanie is a wild, leafy green plant. Branch lettuce refers to tender young leaves of wild watercress gathered in the spring along north-facing creek banks.*

Laura: That's what I told her [Foy]. We didn't have breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Lula: No!

Laura: You had breakfast and then another meal. Everybody went to bed early.

Lula: And if you ate potatoes at one meal, then you ate black beans at another meal. You didn't have them both at the same time. I can remember one time that we didn't have nothing to eat but a potato. You know you could raise your own potatoes back then. I don't know how they did that, and all that.



Laura Blankenship. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2005.

Foy Allen Edelman: And did you go off to church as a family?

Lula: Not really. I know my daddy went because they had an Indian class and these old men would read out of the Indian [Bible]. They had an Indian Bible. And I've often wondered what they ever done with them Indian Bibles, long time ago.

Laura: The old ones.

Cory: The Bibles written in Cherokee, shortly after the syllabary was invented that they started translating into Cherokee.

Lula: On Sunday after church we'd go home after church and the porch would be full of people and they stayed for lunch. And I don't know how my parents fed all of them. They never left 'till after lunch. Well they just came. You wasn't invited! [laughter] They always a-visited. And like if a person needed a home built, they built. All the neighbors would come in. And you don't see people today a-helping people. They'd come in and put up a house in no time. And that was just all on the material from the mountains. There wasn't nothing that was bought. Like the boards that they covered a house in. They made them.

Laura: Wood shingles they call them now.

Lula: But the house, going back to raising twelve children. It was just one room and a kitchen, a lean-to kitchen. And, then they finally got



Lula Owl. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2005.

enough stuff, I guess, to build another extra bedroom on the end. You didn't have much cover when it snowed and the snow would come in through the roof of the house or whatever.

And another thing, I carried my babies on my back, every one of my babies I carried on my back. And I went around with a baby on my back a'cleaning house and then when I went to sleep, I'd just go lay it on the bed. We didn't have a baby bed or nothing like that.

Laura: No crib or car seats.

Lula: And put a quilt by them. We didn't use mattresses either. We had straw, they'd have a new stack of straw and you filled this big old tick with new straw and, boy, you thought you had a new bed when that new straw come in. You could make your own bed out of wood. You didn't have springs, I don't guess. And you had a little old mill you could grind your own corn to make bread or whatever.

You call them the good old days. [laughter] I tell you, the young people today I don't think could ever take what we went through even when I was raising my children. That's why we like it today. And we didn't have no bills either! [laughter] I miss them days!

Back then, you got out and worked. I started working about 1943. Well when I started working at the hospital, I didn't know that kind of food. I had to learn [what] Jell-O and [what] all that stuff was. I learned by doing, not by books. Back then there was no childcare. I had a girl that stayed with me three days a week to keep the two little ones when I worked and that was a dollar a day for her. But I bought a house and land for \$350 when I first started working. But I had friends, I had good friends and they loaned me the money, and they said, "You pay it back, but don't ask where it come from." And I paid it back. If you don't have friends, well you just can't make it.

There was no welfare. There was no commodity food.

Laura: No food stamps.

Lula: I didn't depend on nothing. You worked for it. See, we raised our own beans. We didn't have to go buy them. And then we'd cook them and put them in a big old barrel and put salt on them and water. And put a big rock on them and, if you had roasting ears, you'd boil them and put them in there and you'd have pickled corn. Then you'd let that sour, and then you'd eat that in the wintertime.

Laura: We still do that. Where's your pickled beans? I'll get a jar.

Lula: They still do that. You can take that home with you. Every time somebody comes, they get something.

Laura: You don't come to her house unless you leave with something.

Lula: Not unless you leave with something.

“Franco-American” Shrimp Stew

Becky and Alton Paul (Carteret County)

[In the spring of 2005, I attended a “Community Night” for Otway in Carteret County at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center on Harkers Island. This was one of a series of sociable events in which the museum highlights a coastal community with speakers and residents recalling their heritage and the experiences that made their growing-up years memorable. A tasty covered dish supper adds a culinary dimension to the history lessons. Down East citizens enjoy vibrant connections to the sea and sounds, to wild ponies and waterfowl, to the Outer Banks and to Cape Lookout lighthouse. They also have a unique culinary tradition that includes, among other things, water-based clam chowder, light bread, and duck stew with rutabagas. I asked Pam Morris, the museum’s Community, Collections, and Education Coordinator, if she knew some local folks who might be willing to meet with me. She recommended several excellent cooks, among them Becky Paul from Davis. Becky welcomed me with shrimp dip and an account of her father’s seagoing recipe for shrimp stew. The following interview was recorded on April 19, 2005, in Carteret County. To listen to the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal’s website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

Becky: My name is Rebecca Sue Brown Paul and I’m known as Becky Paul. I live in Davis now. I’ve been here for forty years. I grew up in Marshallberg, which is probably six or seven miles from Davis. It’s one of the Down East communities. My parents was Claude and Belle Brown, and my mother’s people came from Ocracoke. And my father’s people,

they moved here in 1904 from Beaufort County, Pantega. My grandmother and my grandfather was from Hyde County, the town of Swan Quarter. We always had ponies. My grandfather owned an island. It's called Brown's Island. And it's between Harkers Island and Marshallberg.

My father, he was a sea captain. He was commercial fisherman, carried charters to the Gulf Stream. He made this when he was on the boat and I just guessed at the ingredients because we don't have a recipe. We just make it by eye. And he didn't like spaghetti. Well, this recipe, you have to have Franco American Spaghetti. I guess when they went on the boat they carried canned goods with them, like corned beef and things to that effect. But they also cooked a lot of seafood. When they would leave here, they'd go out to Pamlico Sound. This is when he was shrimping. This isn't when he was carrying charters. He would take his potatoes and peel them and he always diced them. Then he'd put his onion in it and he'd cut his onion up kind of fine and he'd fry out a streak of lean, streak of fat and put the grease in. And then he'd stew that until the potatoes kind of got tender, and then he would add the shrimp and the Franco-American Spaghetti. You had to have Franco-American. It won't work with that Chef Boyardee. [laughter] You've got to have the Franco-American! And then he said he would take the paddle fins off of crabs. He would just take the hard crabs and break the paddle fins off and put them in this and cook paddle fins of crabs in with the stew. And he always had corn bread with it on the boat, but later on, we always cooked light bread with it.

Light bread is what it's called in this end of the county. It's yeast bread and it was made out of the staples that people kept in their houses back in the olden days. They didn't use milk or eggs in their bread. They used water, flour, and sugar. Most people in this area, their bread is kind of crusty on the top but my mother's was real soft. But anyway, that is light bread. Of course, my mother was from Ocracoke and my grandparents were from Hyde County and Beaufort County. So they cooked different.



Becky Paul. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2005.

Everybody always used to have a garden in this area. That's something else my father did. He was a jack-of-all trades. When I was a child, he bought a tractor in the '50s. He planted green beans and potatoes and cabbage.

Alton: Hello!

Becky: This is my husband, Alton Paul. We always ate a lot of deer meat. My father was an avid hunter. We had deer meat. I grew up on deer meat.

Alton: I did too.

Becky: They didn't probably eat as much as we did. I think we had it every day.

Alton: We either caught it or killed it or raised it in the garden.

Becky: Yeah, we had deer meat and like he said, raised it. Daddy had pigs and everything. Mama would fool everybody with bear meat. She'd cook bear meat and they'd think they were eating beef. She did it to me. I wouldn't eat bear meat, but she'd cook it and I'd think I was eating beef. And the people in this area back then didn't eat deer meat much and they didn't eat bear meat, but all of Daddy's people from Hyde County eat that stuff. So, we eat it. We grew up on it.

The Ocracoke drum, the big red drum, that is the favorite fish of Ocracoke. My mother would boil the fish and have it in a plate. Your potatoes were separate, your onions, boiled eggs chopped and onions chopped. And when you went to the table, you'd put your potatoes, and then you'd put your fish, and if you wanted onion, egg, bacon bits and the grease, you fixed it on your plate.

Alton: Those sea mullets they've got out there in the sink there are just as good.

Becky: Alton! She would put it on that table. That was her table. She'd have her little dishes of the different things. And we fixed it like we wanted it.

Well, when I came up here to Davis and my mother-in-law cooked it, my mother-in-law was from Sea Level, and she cooked like the people here on, I guess, Davis and Sea Level. She stewed it all together. She stewed her potatoes and onions together, and then she added her fish into that. That's the way they cook it up here. That's like a Core Sound style. On Ocracoke they don't.

Something else I hadn't ever seen when I came up here was white clam chowder. Mother always cooked it like her mother did in Ocracoke. She put tomatoes in it. She made the Manhattan style. My mother-in-law, Euletha Paul, she made the white kind. So, she stewed her clams, potatoes and onions, and then she put like corn dumplings in it. All was

water-based. They didn't use milk-based on the coast. Maybe they didn't have milk or they saved the milk for something else. I don't know why.

Heritage Apples

Tom Brown (Forsyth County)

[My husband, Jerry Edelman, and I met Tom Brown in September 2003 at the annual "Corn Shucking Frolic" held at Horne Creek Farm in rural Stokes County, not far from the Virginia line. The farm is a bustling center of "living" history that attempts to replicate the experience of everyday farm life in the northwestern Piedmont around 1900. The day we were there, outdoor cooking fires crackled beneath large, black iron pots filled with chicken stew and apple butter, city children laughed as they learned to push corn cobs through an old fashioned husker, mules briskly pulled wooden plows through a garden patch, and a shape note group sang old hymns. Tom Brown was there, standing over neat rows of colorful apples spread out on poster paper. Tom's booth displayed a sign that read: "My Hobby Finding 'Lost' Apple Varieties." A resident of Forsyth County, Tom was present to query visitors about their personal knowledge of unfamiliar varieties of apples. This is not a pursuit that pays. In fact, Tom hasn't earned a dime from his many discoveries. But his passion is finding "lost" apple varieties, those old strains that our ancestors used to make tangy pies, applesauce, cakes, vinegar, and also to feed livestock. Once identified, Tom restores them to production and tries to interest local nurseries in distributing these old apples to the public. Currently, he's found over 500 varieties. He's determined, he says, to continue looking until he's rediscovered at least 755, "to equal the number of home runs Hank Aaron hit!" The following interview was recorded in Clemmons, North Carolina, February 25, 2004. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

I'm Tom Brown from Clemmons, North Carolina. My hobby is looking for old heritage apple varieties. These are varieties that people knew about a hundred years ago but can't find any more. I try to find them and then restore them to production, to get them into preservation orchards, and to get them to people who sell the heritage trees.

I've found over four hundred rare varieties. The last two years, I found over a hundred varieties. My wife and I both love farmer's markets, and so we would frequently go to the farmers market in Winston-Salem at the Dixie Classic Fairgrounds. And there was a man there who sells the old trees, but during the summer and early fall he comes there with some of the apples and sells the apples. And I was fascinated by all the names and textures and colors and tastes, and I finally

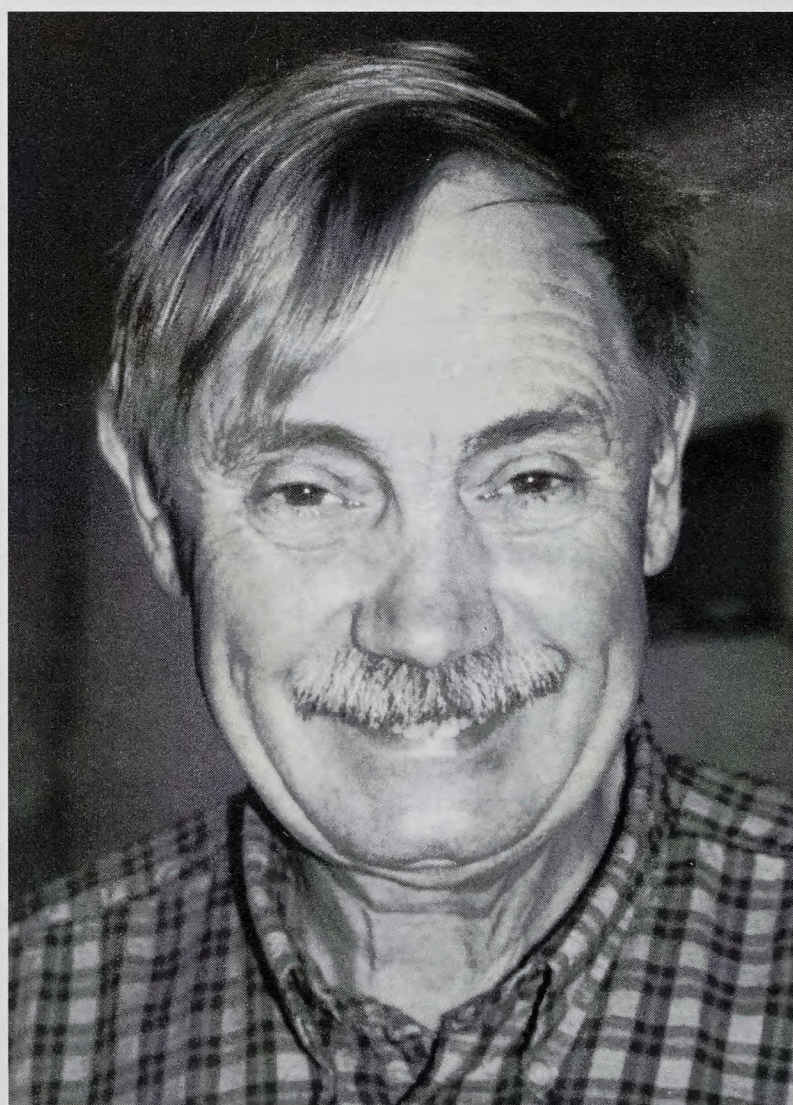
found out that several of the varieties he had found himself, and I asked if there were any varieties in our particular area that I needed to look for, and one of them was called the Harper Seedling which was in our area of Forsyth County. So, I finally started looking for the Harper Seedling and wasn't having any success. So, I approached the local newspaper, the Winston-Salem Journal.

They ran an article about my looking for the Harper Seedling apple. I got quite a few responses and still didn't find the apple. And it was also sold by Yadkin County Nursery. And I contacted *The Yadkin Ripple* newspaper [a publication for the North Carolina wine industry], and they also ran an article and I got a few more responses, and I still didn't find anything and it was like the proverbial casting the net one more time. So, I'm from Iredell County, and I approached the *Statesville Record & Landmark*. They ran an article and I found five lost apples as a result of that article, and then I was hooked, you know, after that.

Some that I'd really like to find would be the Kitagaskee. It was an apple that originated with Indians and sold extensively by Georgia nurseries. Only one person has ever mentioned that and it was somebody up in Swain County, up in the mountains. And then some others I'm looking for are the Early Colton and the Fort's Prize.

I have hunted most all of western North Carolina from Forsyth County on west. My very best area has been Wilkes County where I've found seventy to eighty varieties.

They originally came from central Asia, Khajistan. But they've been around quite a long time. In like 200 BC in some ancient Roman texts, there were mentions of twenty apple varieties. There were only maybe five types of native crab apples in North America. The early settlers brought apples over from England and Germany and Russia and maybe they brought over three or four hundred varieties.



Tom Brown. Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.

Apples are cross-pollinated. So, anytime an apple falls to the ground and grows from seed, it's a new variety, so you had this very fertile land in North America that was free of a lot of the apple diseases that had been common in Europe, and so there was excellent growth and explosion of apple varieties because although grafting has been around since the Roman times, it wasn't commonly used. People grew apples from seeds. All of a sudden, hundreds and hundreds of new varieties, and then people would recognize one of these seedlings, and recognize that it had merit, and then people would start growing that locally or maybe a nursery would hear about it and they would distribute it more extensively.

We have found some amazing apples. Like we went to this elderly man's home, named Langford Jordan, and he had a seedling there that he had found years ago. We were just amazed at the wonderful taste of the apple. I don't particularly really like wine sap apples, but there was one near Robbinsville, North Carolina, that's way in the tip of the state near Fontana Dam. Probably called the Yellow Wine Sap because it's yellow inside and that had the most delicious flavor of any apple I've ever tasted, but that just compares to the old original wine sap to the modern ones that are picked early and there's a tremendous difference. And some of the apples are really, really tart.

The colors of the apples are fascinating. They vary from solid green apples to extremely bright red apples and streaked apples and some have pin stripes of red. This past year I found one that was called the Beauty of the World, and that was just a gorgeous bright red apple, and it was the prettiest apple you'd ever see in your life, and certainly deserved that designation. And I've also found some that are called rusty coats. They have maybe typically a rough textured skin, brown rusty-like coating on the apple. There are many beautiful yellow apples. In fact, that provides a slight identification problem because there are so many different yellow apples that look just slightly different from another yellow apple.

One of the most famous [apples] is the Arkansas Black, and it is truly a black color. It's a black-red, but it's almost entirely black. I found an apple in Watauga County called the Buckeye Beauty and it was a gorgeous bright yellow color with a beautiful blush on it. And then there's also one in Yancey County that's called a Yellow Pippin. It's a big oblong apple. Fully ripe, it's a very bright yellow color. One side of it is a bright day glow pink color and it is just gorgeous and then it has rusty-like specks on it.

The smallest apple I have found is the Huckleberry. It was no larger than a golf ball. Some of the names of some of the larger apples would be a Wolf River or a Knotly Pea apple, Gloria Mundi apple.



Varieties of Tom Brown's "Heritage" apples on display at the Corn Shucking Frolic. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.*

The shapes vary extensively. There's real flat apples. And then there's oblong apples. But that's a little out of the ordinary. And then there are some that are very conical. They're pointed like the sharp point of like a child's top.

Well, the most famous of all Southern lost apples is the Junaluska apple and it was the one that I most urgently wanted to find for two reasons: because it was rare and unique and famous, but also my brother and I spent thousands of hours looking for Indian arrowheads and artifacts, so we were very interested in Indian culture, and I thought it would be great to restore that to the Cherokee Indians.

The story behind the Junaluska goes back to something that was found in the [U.S.] Department of Agriculture record. There was a mention there that the government wanted to buy land from the Cherokee and they were agreeable except that there was one difficult point: the land contained the chief's favorite apple tree, and they eventually had to pay fifty dollars extra to buy the land because of the apple tree. It doesn't mention exactly where the tree was, but there was like real extensive Cherokee settlements in Macon County and west of Franklin where the Macon County airport is. Luckily, contemporary with this time in Macon County there was one of the early famous apple growers named Silas McDowell, and he had an extensive orchard with maybe as many as six hundred trees, and

he also liked to comb the hills and valleys and find seedling trees of outstanding quality. He also sold apple trees in addition to selling apples. He originated at least a dozen types of apples like the Nicojack apple and the Culasagee apple. And he also sold the Junaluska apple.

We can only hope that he got cuttings off the original tree. But his orchard existed through 1859 and then there was a disastrous freeze that killed most of his trees and then he went out of production. So, it had been over a hundred and forty years since the Junaluska had been sold. And I went to Macon County hoping to find the tree. I first approached a local newspaper about running an article about my searching for the Junaluska, hoping somebody had seen the tree before. The newspaper article generated a lot of responses, but nobody had seen the tree.

In some of my early visits to the town, I met a gentleman named Johnny Crawford. He offered to take me to several places where there were old apple trees. And on the very second place he took me, it was on the top of a mountain at this elderly lady's home. And her home was about eight miles from the original Silas McDowell nursery, which was on the Highland Road east of Franklin, probably in about April. And of course, there were no apples, but when she described the apple, I thought "this might be the Junaluska," but she called the apple the John Barry Keeper, because it had originally come from an old John Barry home place.

I continued my searches while I was waiting for the apples to get ripe in the county, meeting people and trying to find somebody that had seen the Junaluska. And with a lot of hard work and following up every lead humanly possible, I finally met a man in Raven County, Georgia, who remembered the Junaluska from Jackson County, and then I met three people who remembered seeing the Junaluska in Haywood County. Then I went back and got the apples and found that they perfectly fit the description in one of the old historical texts, where somebody had apparently looked at the apples and described them in great detail. I also got apples and sent them to the four people. And the people in Haywood County agreed that it was the Junaluska. The man in Raven County, Georgia, was not sure because he remembered them having a blush. I went back one more trip and got some of the very latest apples that had had the very most exposure to the sun and I was finally able to find quite a few that had a blush on them and showed them to him, and he agreed that that was the Junaluska. After that, I followed up to try to get these apples returned to the Cherokee.

The chief [Junaluska] is actually buried near Robbinsville, North Carolina. Each year in October, they have a special ceremony with high

school students and bands and it's quite an elaborate ceremony commemorating the life of the Chief Junaluska at his gravesite and memorial. That particular year they planted three of the Junaluska trees at the gravesite. I also donated four Junaluska trees to the Lake Junaluska Assembly, the Methodist retreat at the small town of Lake Junaluska near Waynesville. And I've donated trees to the Western Band of the Cherokee that are in Oklahoma and also to the Cherokee Senior Center in Cherokee, North Carolina. In addition to that, I have given Junaluska cuttings to about seven people who sell the old apple trees. And so it will be in extensive production. It's a reasonably good eating apple and a great apple for cooking for applesauce and makes a really good apple pie.

There was a man in the Burning Town area of Macon County. This man has extensively helped me to find apples. The Burning Town name comes from the fact that when the Cherokee were driven out and started on their Trail of Tears, as they were leaving, they looked back in the distance and saw their Indian village being burned, which is very, very sad. The reason I wanted to return the Junaluska to them 'cause we've taken so much from them, I wanted to give something back to them.

Souse Meat

Inez Elizabeth Graves Blackwell (Caswell County)

[Without the assistance of the North Carolina County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Education, "Coming Together at the North Carolina Table" would not have been possible. It was Donna Pointer, a former Caswell County Extension Agent, who introduced me to Inez Blackwell. Both Donna Pointer and Inez Blackwell spoke about culinary traditions in Caswell County. Mrs. Pointer moved to Yanceyville thirty-eight years ago and remembers going to meetings where the most popular dessert was plain white pound cake served with sweet pickles. Mrs. Blackwell has always lived in Caswell County and says the most popular meal—at least among African-American families—has always been turnip greens, corn bread fritters, and chitterlings. For thirty-seven years, Inez Blackwell has written a column called "Yanceyville News" in the local weekly newspaper, The Caswell Messenger. She's covered topics from watermelons to sidewalks and respect for the elderly or, she says, "whatever crosses my mind." While Inez Blackwell's public voice is often expressed in her column, she frequently uses poetry to address and deal with more personal issues. The following interview was recorded in Yanceyville, October 25, 2002. To hear the interview, go to the North Carolina Folklore Journal's website: www2.chass.ncsu.edu/NCFJ.]

[I'm] Inez Elizabeth Graves Blackwell and my nickname[is] "Sis." I was born in Caswell County, Yanceyville, North Carolina, December 13, 1930. My parents, William Barnard Graves, Carrie Elizabeth Slade Graves. I had one brother, Walter Edward Graves. He's dead now.

When I was born I had six fingers on my left hand and my grandmother, Golden Slade, tied a string around it, let it stay on until the finger came off. I was raised by my grandparents, Willy and Golden Slade. They had twelve of their own and raised my brother, Walter, and I. It was years before I knew that I wasn't one of their own. Mama and Papa explained to me that my mother was Carrie that lived in Durham. From that day on, I was afraid of her because I thought she would take me from "Mama" and Papa.

Grandmother took me to live with her when I was very small.

She said to me, "Remember you can stay short or you can grow tall.

"You will find out in life you are going to face many trials and lots of strife,

"But always keep God by your side.

"Let Him be your Leader and your guide.

"Try to do your best in school.

"Never forget the golden rule.

"You know I have tried to raise you up in the right way,

"Because you'll be grown and on your own one day.

"But don't ever forget to kneel down and pray.

"Then the Lord will help you on your way.

"Try to help someone, as I did you.

"God will tell you what to do.

"Treat your fellow man as your friend.

"God will be with you until the end.

"Hold your head high and walk with pride,

"And God will walk right by your side.

"Continue to be good, remember to stand tall.

"Keep God in mind, you will never fall."

These are memories I will never forget and love the best,

Now that my dear grandmother—mother—has gone home to rest.

(Golden Phillips Slade Bow. That was her name.)

She was from here in Yanceyville. Always lived here in Yanceyville. All my aunts left and my mother and all left, went up state but I never did like it there. So I came back and stayed with mama. Still living here, married, and raised eight children almost in the same neighborhood I was raised in. My earliest memory of childhood is being in a home full of love. Mama took her mother when she became too old to work and Aunt Celia Graves, no kin, a neighbor that was too old to live alone.



Inez Elizabeth "Sis" Graves Blackwell. *Photo by Dr. Anne Phillips, 2002.*

Her son, Thomas, lived in New York, and we loved her because she was blind.

They moved around a lot because they were sharecroppers, farm workers. So if someone offered Papa more money and a better house, we moved. That is why I always said as a child, when I grew up I was going to have my own home, and, thank God, I have my own home. They raised pigs, chickens, had cows. I had a pig until hog killing time. I never did like to be around when the hog killing because I always had to cry when they kilt my pig.

We had chores in the morning before we went to school and at night, bringing in wood, going to the spring for water, cleaning the lamp everyday, helped to clean the house, helped wash the clothes in tin tubs, bringing water to wash the clothes with, taking care of the younger children, also picked fruits and berries, and worked in the tobacco. You name it, we did it. So we played hopscotch, jump rope, circle games, rolling tides, baseball with homemade balls, tobacco thread, playing with corn shucks dolls, making our own playhouse, and throwing snow balls, and so forth.

We grew everything and Mama canned and preserved everything. Mama did all of the cooking until Fanny [her sister] and those got old enough to start cooking and then she started working outside the home,

so she left Fanny and Golden and the girls there to do the cooking at home. One house lady would try to get her from the other house lady. "Come work for me, come work for me." She had a plenty of jobs because she was a real good cook. My daddy loved pork chops and he loved cheese and eggs, and gravy, hot biscuits, and ham or some fatback meat nearbout every Sunday.

This is a treat that I always made at Christmas and I usually give some to some friends. And when we would kill hogs, I would always go somewhere and get the hog head, the pig feet, and the pig tails, came home and cleant them and soaked them in salt water overnight. The next day I would cook 'em, take all the meat off them, and set it aside and let it get cold, so I could work with it with my hands and get all of the bones out of it. Then I would season it with salt and pepper and then have me something like a cake pan, press it down real hard. Put it in the refrigerator until it chill. After it chill real good, you take your knife and it will cut real pretty. And you put it in some vinegar and then you could serve it. But you don't have to put it in vinegar, 'cause you can make sandwiches out of it or you can eat it with crackers, but I usually like to put it in the vinegar 'cause I like to eat it with my beans and you can eat it with turnip greens, cabbage, just mostly anything. It's just a good meat. I don't make it as much as I used to make it because all of us have problems with high blood pressure and it's pork. Christmas time, I used to make more at Christmas time. Soon as they started killing hogs, I started making souse meat so we'd have it in the home but then after we started having blood pressure problems, I stopped making it as often, I just make it at Christmas now, but I always make some at Christmas time. Don't seem right if I don't have some.

Grandma Mabel's Days

~ by R. Calvin Dark II

Recently, I discovered in my parents' attic a handwritten journal kept by my grandmother, Mabel McMasters Bowden. Packed away and undisturbed along with a half century's worth of birthday wishes, condolences, sales receipts and tax records, the journal contains over 400 daily entries beginning in January 1951 and continuing through the spring of 1952. I always wanted to spend just one day with Grandma Mabel, who died years before I was born. With the gift of her journal, I have that and much more—one year, five months, and fourteen days, to be exact.

Grandma Mabel's entries are brief and she rarely expresses her feelings in them. But at the end of each day, she took up her fountain pen and recorded in a simple date book two or three sentences about the company she kept, the houses she cleaned and peaches she canned, the inspiring words she heard, and other tid-bits of information on a wide range of topics like the weather and seeing a traveling zoo "in town" (Siler City or Liberty, North Carolina). These entries tell us little about national issues or politics, and nothing about the international tensions that kept the post-war world on edge. But collectively they meticulously describe the everyday life and values of a hard-working, devout woman whose life centered around work, family, friends, and religion.

Mabel McMasters Bowden was born on January 2, 1910, at the old family place in the north-

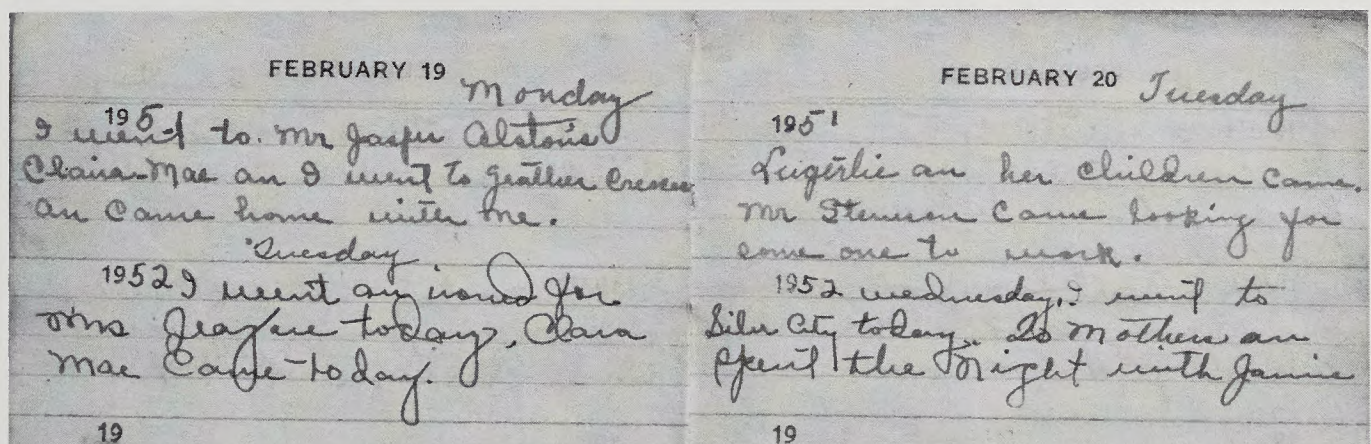


Mabel McMasters Bowden, 1950. *Photo courtesy of R. Calvin Dark II.*

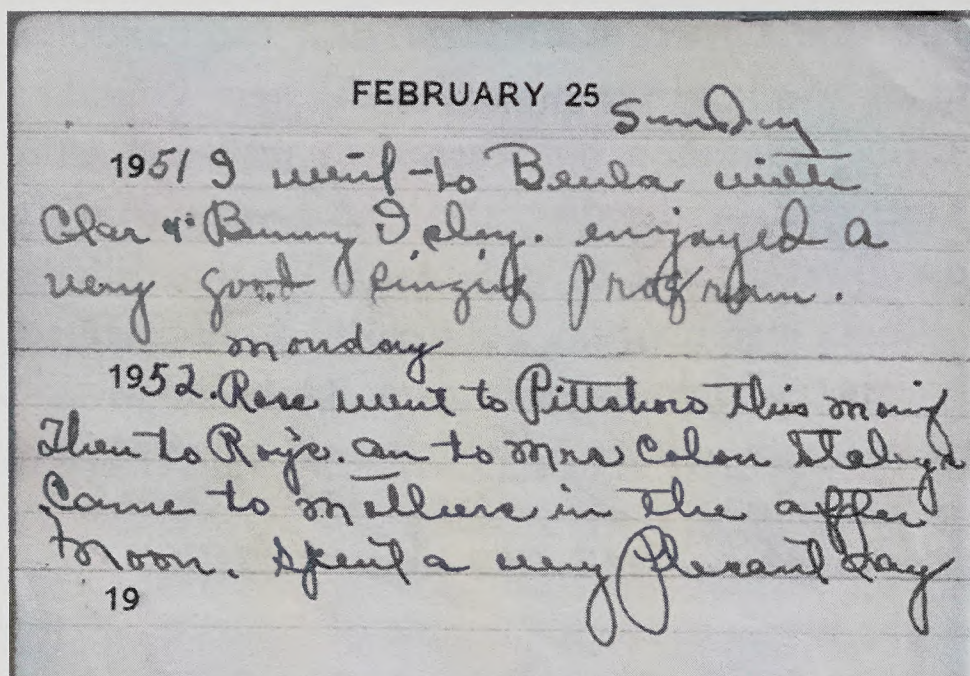
west corner of Chatham County, North Carolina, near the Randolph County line. The third of a school teacher's five children, Grandma Mabel received little formal education but learned to read and write extremely well, as is illustrated by the diary's careful penmanship. In 1925, she married Ross Bowden and moved five miles through the woods and farms of Ross's parents and siblings to Bowden Road. Grandma Mabel had eight children of her own: Ophelia, Marvin Eugene, Roy Amos, Clyde, Jerome, Eddie Melvin, Ronald Sylvester, and Margie Elizabeth, my mother.

By 1951, all of Mabel's children except the youngest, Margie, were teenagers or adults. So, she began to work a couple of hours a day for the Teagues, a local white family who lived about a mile down the road. Some days, she "cleaned house" and other days, she washed and ironed clothes, which in the early 1950s in Chatham County was still extremely labor intensive. Laundry was done in the creek or in basins of hot water. Heavy cast irons were manually heated on a stove. Summer and early fall were especially busy for the whole family, including the Bowden Road children, whose school vacations were scheduled around tobacco: the cycles of setting and hoeing plants, and then the laborious process of picking, tying, and curing bundles of gold leaf.

Next to visiting with family and friends, Grandma Mabel's journal reveals that churchgoing was the most important non-work activity in her life. In fact, Grandma Mabel was a founding member of Rocky River Baptist Church, a small African-American congregation still worshipping today, where she did "everything but preach." She sang in the choir, taught Sunday school, coordinated youth activities, kept the financial records and, occasionally, cleaned the sanctuary. But Grandma Mabel's churchgoing wasn't limited to Rocky River. During the year and a half of her diary, she mentions at least fifteen churches she attended, all within a twenty-mile radius of Bowden Road. During Revival season, she attended as many as three services a day. Grandma Mabel hardly ever



Sample entries from the journal of Mabel McMasters Bowden. *Courtesy of R. Calvin Dark II.*

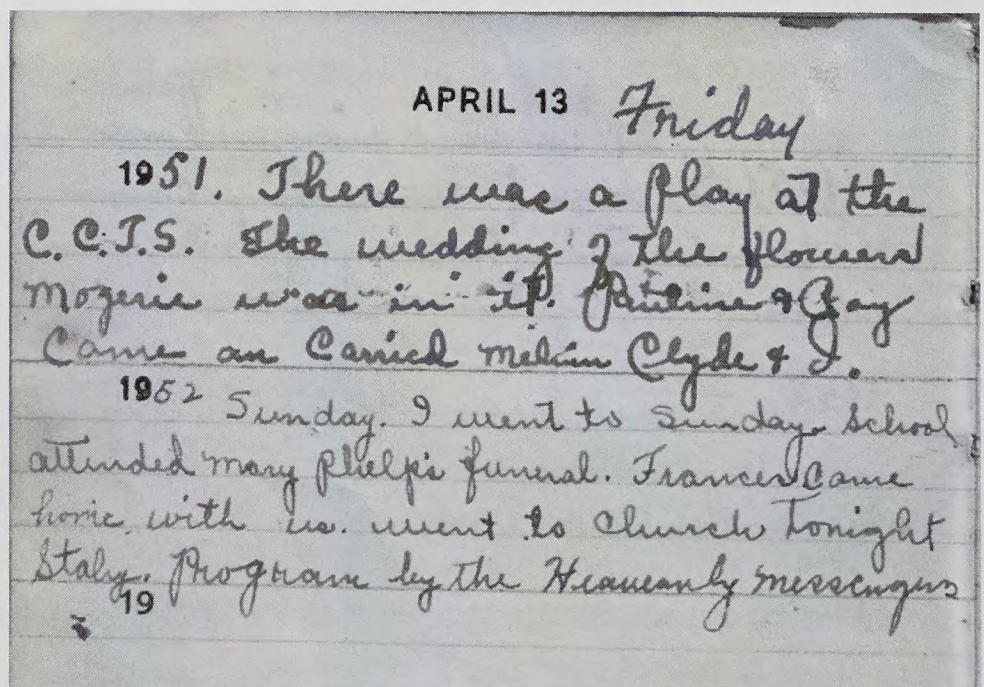


missed the annual outdoor meeting by a local white preacher, Rev. Obie Johnson, whose summer revivals attracted a cross-section of denominations and took place in the shade of a big oak tree in the

front yard of Mabel's nearby in-laws, Uncle Lace and Aunt Lilly Martin.

We can easily judge Grandma Mabel by the company she kept, because her journal is a complete record of everyone she visited and of those who visited her. She didn't just record the names of out-of-town guests like her sisters Janie, who visited annually from New York City, and Fannie, who occasionally made the twenty-five mile journey from Greensboro. To Grandma Mabel, every visitor was special, even her sister-in-law, Thelma, or her mother-in-law, Ruth Bowden, who both lived just up the road. In the entry for November 11, 1951, Mabel names her son Jerome, who was still living at home, but who visited with "his girl friend and [her] sister."

The care with which Grandma Mabel chronicled visits to her home is clear in the way she recorded the names of her guests. Reading names like Mrs. McMasters, Mr. and Mrs. Leeroy Bowden or Rev. A.P. Burnette, you would never guess that they were not local dignitaries. Rather, they were Grandma Mabel's mother, brother and sister-in-law, and Uncle Passmore, respectively. (Though it is obvious that she had a lot of company in 1951-52, Bowdens today assure me that the number paled in comparison to 1955, when Grandpa Ross and Grandma Mabel were the first African-American household on Bowden Road to



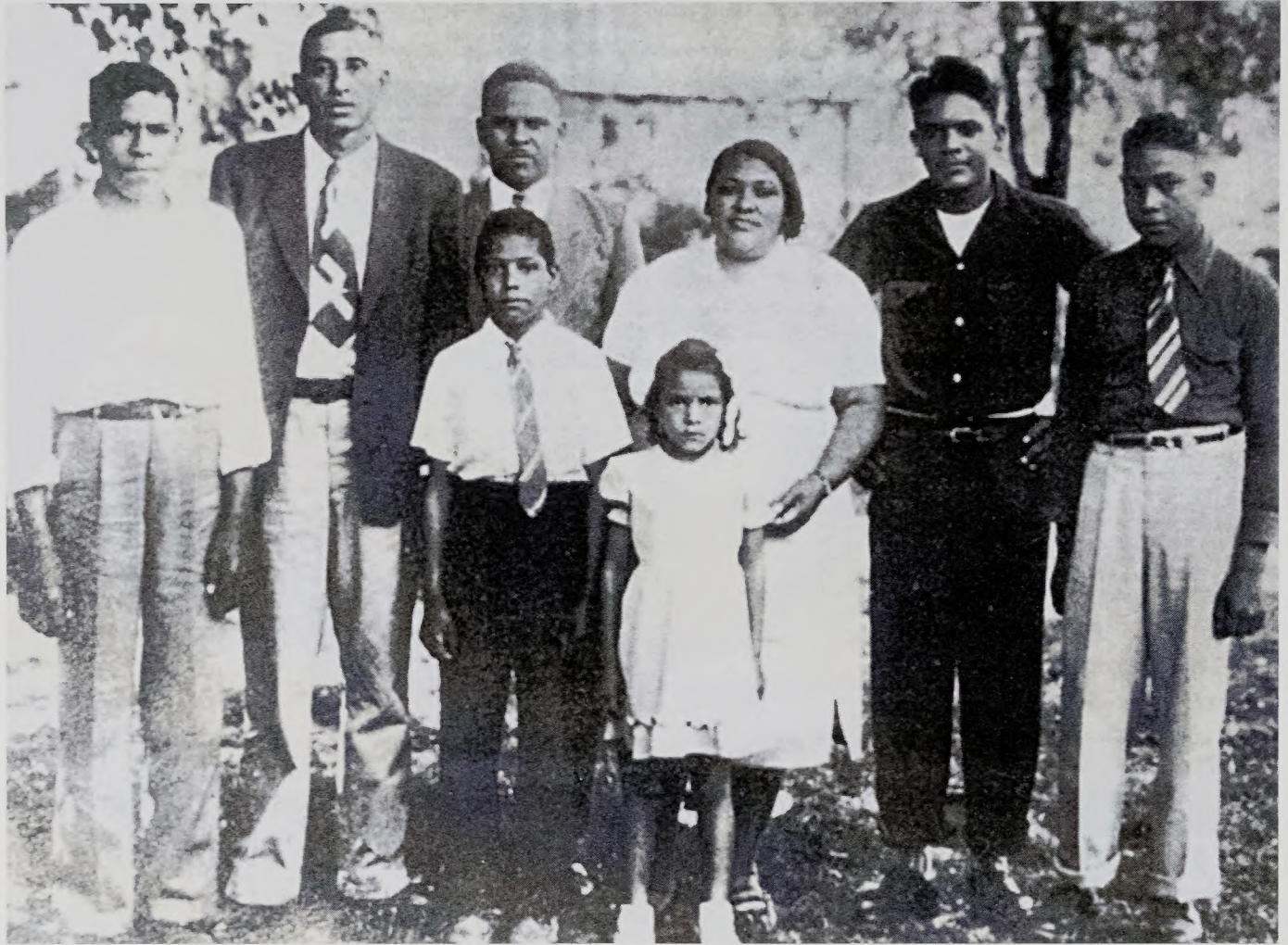


Mabel and Ross Bowden, 1965. *Photo courtesy of R. Calvin Dark, II.*

own a television.) When Rocky River Baptist Church hosted a Union Meeting or the Sunday School Convention, it was not feasible for delegates to travel back home late at night, so very often they stayed with Grandma Mabel.

Grandma Mabel's journal records her visits to the sick and bereaved, as well as her "sitting up" at night with the body of a deceased relative and, with grim regularity, her attending funeral services (at least a dozen in eighteen months). It tells about canning pears, making kraut, going to town to buy chicks and then feed to raise them, and making "flowers" with cousin Lossie McMasters. But it remains for those who remember her to fill in the details that indicate, for example, just how treasured those flowers were. They were colorful, realistic bouquets made from crepe paper, Kleenex, wire hangers, and paraffin wax, and Grandma Mabel was locally famous for producing them. What is not revealed in the journal are the things that I already knew about Grandma Mabel—her sense of humor and personal values, her character, and her inspiring presence. These qualities of Grandma Mabel are still clearly reflected today in her descendants, who in very different ways and in far-flung places carry on her legacy and practice her values daily. But Grandma Mabel's journal does provide a written record of her commit-

ment to hard work, family, and faith, which is a reminder of who we are and the deep roots from which we have grown.



Ross and Mabel McMasters Bowden family portrait, 1952. *Photo courtesy of R. Calvin Dark II.*

Editorial note: Although space limitations did not allow us to reproduce the entire journal of Mabel McMasters Bowden, an annotated version of the text, along with photos and recordings of interviews may be seen and heard at: www.talesfrommydarkside.com/mabel.

2005 Brown-Hudson Folklore Awards

Citations for the Brown-Hudson Awards and the Community Traditions Award were read at the North Carolina Folklore Society's Annual Conference, "Music in Our World: Taking It to the Streets." The meeting was a joint educational conference on folk and roots music, and was organized in partnership with PineCone (The Piedmont Council of Traditional Music) and the Society for Ethnomusicology, Southeast and Caribbean Chapter. It was held on April 1-2, 2005, at the Talley Student Center, North Carolina State University.

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Twenty Dollar Non-Blues: Cece Conway Folklorist, Organizer of Festivals, and Lovable Colleague

~ by Thomas McGowan and Daniel W. Patterson

Eugenia Cecelia Conway came from her native Texas to North Carolina in 1960 to study at Duke University. Her matriculation there plunged her into a long love affair with the folk music of our state and led to a productive scholarly career. She has spent the four and a half decades since then exploring and promoting the special excellences of folk musicians, important regional music traditions, and, in particular, African-American influences on the development of Southern and Mountain banjo traditions. From her fieldwork, Dr. Conway has produced an extensive body of audio recordings, videos, and films that



Cece Conway, Thomas McGowan, and Daniel W. Patterson. *Photo by Carmine Prioli, 2005.*

preserve and document notable performances and interviews with important traditional artists. She has deepened our appreciation of the bright sounds of the Southern banjo. Cece's work, like her personality, has been engaged and intensely personal, and it richly deserves recognition. We delight in the North Carolina Folklore Society's presenting her the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award today.

At Duke, Cece encountered folklorist Holger Nygard and his wife, festival organizer and social activist Margaret Nygard. She kept a long, productive friendship with that couple, working on local festivals and particularly on Margaret's masterpiece in environmental and cultural conservation, the Festival for the Eno. There Cece also became part of a renaissance of string-band music, closely associated with Alan Jabbour, Tommy Thompson, and all the others in the circle that produced the Holly Rock String Band, the Fuzzy Mountain String Band, and many other notable local groups. Those years around Durham and Chapel Hill were golden times, and Cece played lively roles in fostering that cultural scene and its players. During all this musical excitement, Cece received both B.A. and M.A. degrees from Duke.

After a stint teaching at Western Michigan University, Cece returned to North Carolina to continue a career of study and teaching. She has produced wonderful writing and films about musicians in our state—and notoriously piled-up offices in the institutions of the University of North Carolina system. In the University of North Carolina's Curriculum in Folklore she wrote a doctoral dissertation (under the direction of one of us) which focused on the African-American banjo tradition. Cece's dissertation became an award-winning University of Tennessee Press publication, *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: A Study of Folk Traditions*, published in 1995. It has received many favorable reviews. Roger Abrahams described her work as "an elegy for the long lost singers and the fading music that [Conway] discovered in her field-collecting forays . . . clearly a labor of love, long in the writing, . . . a looking-back book, full of human touches, even while it demonstrates a great deal of reading and thinking of the subject by the author" (1490). Cheryl Keyes praised Cece's "impressive . . . collaboration with banjoist Tommy Thompson of the Red Clay Ramblers and the Hollow Rock String Band in devising a selection of banjo tuning and a notation chart for readers." Keyes calls Cece's book "a monumental one . . . that provides scholars with an in-depth understanding of the Black banjo tradition and its unprecedented impact on American musical culture" (105-6). Cece's fieldwork and research for the book also led to the Smithsonian Folkways compact disc *Black Banjo Songsters* and to

many years of work on an interactive banjo exhibit for the Smithsonian Institution, one that the current political climate unfortunately has put on hold. We can only hope that the project will be revived in some happier day.

These Smithsonian projects remind us that Cece has given much of her time and energy to doing work in a variety of media. While still a graduate student at UNC-Chapel Hill, she produced a radio program on Tommy Jarrell for broadcast over WUNC-FM. In the same years, with Cheyney Hales and Tommy Thompson, she produced the pioneering documentary film *Dink—A Pre-Blues Musician*, a study of African-American banjo player Dink Roberts. And with filmmaker Les Blank, she produced *Sprout Wings and Fly*, an award-winning study of Surry County fiddler Tommy Jarrell, and also a companion film, *Julie*, on the storytelling and life story of Julie Jarrell Lyons, Tommy's sister. She has also filmed, directed, or shared in the production of video studies of Etta Baker, Watauga County singer and storyteller Bessie Eldreth, and Appalachian writer Robert Morgan. She has balanced the creativity of filmmaking with the demands of scholarly writing. Her filmmaking and record production are supplemented by articles studying Dink Roberts' "High Sheriff" and "the mountain voice and lucid prose" of Robert Morgan.

Cece has also been an enthusiastic and ambitious organizer of folk music festivals. In the early 1970s at Western Michigan University, she organized her first one. As a doctoral student in Chapel Hill, she produced a superb three-day "Winter Folk Festival" of concerts, lectures, and workshops drawing deeply upon newly discovered traditional artists from this state. As a faculty member at Appalachian State University, she organized the special festival accompanying the meeting of the North Carolina Folklore Society in 1988. She has recently established a Winter Folk Festival as a notable campus event in Boone, which this year included a wonderfully productive mix of film showings, playing sessions, and classes, with a central festival celebrating the work and music of John Cohen. And this April, the Appalachian campus rang to the sounds of black banjo players as part of a touring concert series that Cece helped organize. Festivals and professional conferences are special settings for her friendly collaboration, enthusiastic interests, and fellowship. Many of us have delightful memories of her, possibly garbed in a black and gold Appalachian baseball jacket, staying up way too late and talking about a million things at the meetings of the American Folklore Society and the Appalachian Studies Conference.

Cece has also been a generous encourager of young folklorists and regional writers. During her eighteen-year teaching career at Appalachian

State University, she has sent students on to graduate school in folklore and Appalachian studies and to notable public sector jobs, including Will Lewis' role with PineCone in organizing this weekend's conference. At a meeting of our Society in Chapel Hill, she presented an exciting paper on the idea of apprenticeship (as part of a tribute to the retirement of one of us). She has applied the principles set forth in this paper to her own encouragement of students, colleagues, and almost anyone who is serious about regional folklife. The recent work of Betty Smith on Jane Hicks Gentry and the autobiographical writings of Sodom Laurel singer Sheila Kay Adams were supported by Cece's generous encouragement. And three of her students developed essays from her class to become the centerpiece of a *North Carolina Folklore Journal* issue on novelist Lee Smith.

Cece managed the presentation of the Brown-Hudson Folklore Award to Joe and Odell Thompson at our Society meeting at Duke in 1990. It's time we put her on the receiving end of this special recognition. That we honor Cece today at a joint conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology, PineCone, and the North Carolina Folklore Society is particularly fitting. She has contributed in scholarly and movingly human ways to the continuation of regional music traditions and made us value, understand, and love its players because she has studied, hung out and collaborated with, and loved its players and their ways so well.

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With Les Blank, Alice Gerrard, and Maureen Gosling. *Sprout Wings and Fly: A Portrait of Mountain Fiddler Tommy Jarrell*. 1983. 16mm. 30 min.

With Maureen Gosling and Les Blank. *Julie: Old Time Tales of the Blue Ridge*. 1992. 16mm and VHS. 11 min.

Leonard Glenn: Instrument Maker of Spicy Creek. 1993. VHS. 30 min.

My Old Fiddle: A Visit with Tommy Jarrell. 1994.

With Elva Bishop. "One Time Blues": Ms. Etta Baker at Home. 1994. VHS. 28 min.

With Elva Bishop. *Ora Watson of Isaac's Creek*. VHS. 55 min.

With Patricia Sawin and Elva Bishop. *Bessie Eldreth: Mountain Storyteller and Singer*. 1995. VHS. 30 min.

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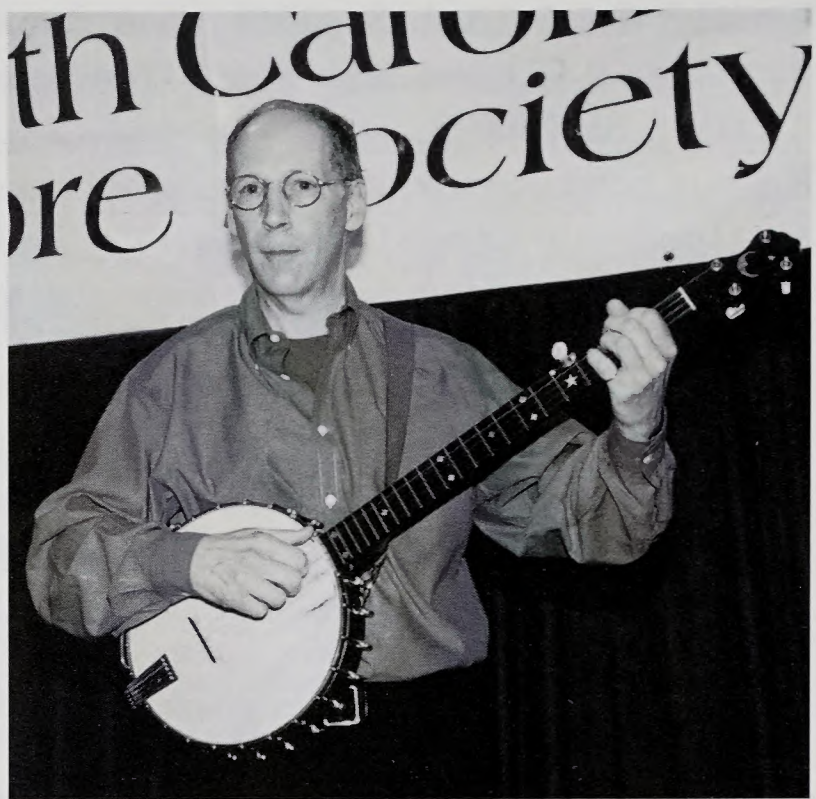
Paul Brown: Musician and Folklorist

~ by George Holt

Although he's been a full-time resident of North Carolina since 1980, Paul was born in New York City. His father was a first generation American of Polish and English-Jewish descent. His mother was born in Norfolk to an old Virginia family. Not surprisingly, Paul's attraction to the South is rooted in his relationship with his mother. As a young girl, Mrs. Brown loved to spend her summers at a plantation near Lynchburg, where she came into contact with local folk musicians and singers, both white and African-American. She learned to sing their songs and collected them in folk music recordings.

It is likely that the first music Paul ever heard came from what I imagine to be the lovely maternal voice of this deeply Southern woman. Paul's mother taught him folksongs and bought records for him when she realized how much he enjoyed what he heard. Although a student of classical piano from age six to fifteen, Paul yearned for a banjo from the time he was a child. It was not until age ten, however, that his mother

brought him the Sears & Roebuck catalog and said he could order an instrument, provided he paid for it himself. He bought the classic Silvertone banjo for thirty-nine dollars, and unknowingly joined countless others in taking the first steps to becoming a folk musician. Mrs. Brown later explained to Paul that she didn't want him to have a banjo when he was a boy, because she feared he wouldn't stick with it.



Paul Brown. *Photo by Carmine Prioli, 2005.*

Paul taught himself to play the banjo the way all traditional musicians do, by careful listening and observation. Although he didn't initially have many players to directly emulate, he nevertheless got the hang of it by sheer determination and developed his own distinctive style. He gained additional exposure to traditional banjo and fiddle playing as a student at Oberlin College, but returned to New York when his parents fell ill. Back East, he made the decision to enroll in trade school and became the apprentice to a noted upholsterer of fine furniture in Mt. Kisco, New York.

Living in Greenwich Village, he taught banjo lessons at the Folklore Center and caught live performances of Southern musicians, who were beginning to appear in the North. They included Benton Flippen and the Smokey Valley Boys of Mt. Airy and Fred Cockerham, another great North Carolina fiddle and banjo player, who often performed with the celebrated master, Tommy Jarrell.

During the five or so years Paul worked in the upholstery business, he made numerous trips to North Carolina and Virginia to attend fiddlers' conventions and to be in the company of older musicians. In 1978, he visited Dellie Chandler Norton, the wonderful ballad singer from Madison County, North Carolina, and met with Tommy Jarrell at his home near Mt. Airy. Tommy introduced Paul to Benton Flippen, which began a musical partnership and personal friendship that remain strong to this day.

It was only a matter of time before Paul would settle in the place that had already become his spiritual home. He received a grant from the

National Endowment for the Arts to study banjo with the great Fred Cockerham in 1980. Sadly, Fred passed away shortly before the apprenticeship was set to commence. With NEA's blessing, Paul moved to Mt. Airy to work with Tommy Jarrell, and this time he stayed. After the official apprenticeship period ended, Paul worked whatever jobs he could find—including stints at a truckstop, saw mill, and furniture factory—to stay close to the musical community of which he was now a vital member.

A turning point came when Paul was invited to work for WPAQ of Mt. Airy, an AM radio station that had remained refreshingly “old-fashioned,” broadcasting local music live from its studios on its *Saturday Morning Merry-Go-Round* program. He told me, “It was like being in a time capsule that carried you back to 1948—nothing had changed since that time.” Paul thought he was being hired to write news copy, but without warning, he was thrust before a microphone. He took to it, though, like a fish to water, and devoted particular attention to the *Merry-Go-Round*, bringing more and more great musicians to the microphone, including Turner and Lynn Fodrell, the first African-American group to appear on the show. Paul would later compile and produce an outstanding anthology of live recordings from the WPAQ archives for Rounder Records.

Paul left WPAQ in 1985 to serve as the editor of a small newspaper in Mt. Pilot. Two years later, he began his career in public radio when he was named production manager for WFDD, a National Public Radio affiliate based at Wake Forest University. At WFDD, Paul created, produced, and hosted the popular weekly program *Across the Blue Ridge*, yet another outstanding and far-reaching endeavor to promote the folk music tradition of the upper Piedmont. His broadcasts often featured live music performed in the studio, just like WPAQ. It was a great show that attracted thousands of appreciative listeners.

Paul's talent and experience led him up the ladder at WFDD and eventually to positions of great responsibility at NPR in Washington, D.C. But his devotion to the music and people of North Carolina has never slackened and he maintains his primary home in Winston-Salem. Each new post has given him a more powerful platform from which to share his love of traditional music and the people who perform it. He recently served as executive editor and presenter for *Honky Tonks, Hymns & the Blues*, an eleven-part series on NPR's Morning Edition celebrating American roots music and he has produced major features on Earl Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and others. More than a decade ago, I invited Paul to serve as the host and presenter of a stage at the Southern Crossroads Festival, an eighteen-day festival of Southern music and culture held at Olympic Centennial Park during the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

He organized and presented to visitors from around the world a wonderful series of programs under the title, *The South on Record*.

Always in the midst of demanding work schedules, Paul has found time to develop recording and radio projects, to perform, and to teach at the most respected folk-music camps, including Augusta Heritage Center, the Swannanoa Gathering at Warren Wilson College, Pinewoods, the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, and the Tennessee Banjo Institute. I'm pleased to say that the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North at Chapel Hill is the recipient of a treasure trove of tapes and papers he's amassed during many years of prodigious activity.

As he became more deeply embedded in the community of traditional musicians in the Mt. Airy/Galax area, Paul became keenly aware of the changes taking place in the cultural life of our country. This realization compelled him to devote his personal and professional lives to the preservation of American traditional music. Those amazing artists with whom some of us were fortunate enough to become acquainted in the 1970s and 1980s were among the last generation of musicians who'd inherited a tradition and style of expression that was relatively unaffected by the mass media, and who represented a type of American character that we may never see the likes of again.

For a lifetime of selfless devotion to the people who have made—and remade—the passionate, joyful, often electrifying and always soulful music we know as Southern string-band music, it's indeed an honor to present to my friend, Paul Brown, the North Carolina Folklore Society's Brown-Hudson Award.

Paul Brown Selected Projects Commercial Audio Recordings

Key: **PR** = Producer
 P = Performer
 E = Recording Engineer

Blizard, Ralph and The New Southern Ramblers. *Fox Chase*. CD. Yodel-Ay-Hee 030. 2000. **E**

Stamper, Art. *Goodbye Girls, I'm Going to Boston*. CD. County 2729. 2000. **E**

Various Artists. *WPAQ: The Early Years*. CD. Rounder 404. 1999. **PR**

Various Artists. *Blue Ridge Mountain Holiday: The Breaking Up Christmas Story*. CD. County 2722. 1998. **PR, P, E**

Camp Creek Boys. *Old Time String Band*. CD. County 2719. 1997. Co-**PR**

Brown, Paul and Mike Seeger. *Way Down in North Carolina*. CD. Rounder 383. 1996. **PR, P, E**

Flippen, Benton. *Old Time, New Times*. CD. Rounder 326. 1994. **PR, P, E**

Edwards, Bert. *Bert's Bombaree*. Cassette. Independent release. 1989. **PR, P, E**

The Smokey Valley Boys. *Durham's Bull*. Cassette. Independent release. 1984.

PR, P

Sykes, Robert and the Surry County Boys. *Black-eyed Susan*. LP. Heritage 057.

1983. **PR, P, E**

Radio Projects

Honky Tonks, Hymns & the Blues. NPR two-hour special. 2005. Executive editor, reporter, host

Honky Tonks, Hymns & the Blues. NPR series. 2003. Executive editor, reporter, host

John Jackson. NPR obituary. 2002. Reporter

John Hartford. NPR obituary. 2001. Reporter

Eudora Welty. NPR obituary. 2001. Reporter

Earl Scruggs: Foggy Mountain Breakdown. NPR story. 2000. Reporter

Bill Monroe: Blue Moon of Kentucky. NPR story. 2000. Reporter

America's Instrument: The Banjo in the 19th Century. NPR book review. 2000.

Reporter

Across the Blue Ridge. Weekly program, WFDD. 1988-1999. Producer, host

Tennessee Banjo Institute. NPR story. 1988. Reporter

Breaking Up Christmas: A Blue Ridge Mountain Holiday. NPR one-hour special.

1988. Producer, host

Eddie Owens Martin, Georgia Visionary Artist. NPR story. 1987. Reporter

Community Project

Hometown Opry. Monthly stage show, Mount Airy, NC. 1985-1997. Co-founder and co-producer

The Capital City Five

Spiritual and Gospel Singers

~ *by Ben Runkle*

Formed in 1944, the Capital City Five have been singing for some sixty-two years. Although only two of the founding members, Millard Jones and Wilbert Jones, remain with the group, there has been remarkably little turnover in that time. Warren Baldwin, who joined in 1966, is the “newest” singing member. Louis Boyd, the sixth member who pre-records and handles playback of their accompanying percussion tracks, has been with the group since 1981. This long period of time together has resulted in a cohesive, instinctual vocal blend and a unique approach to arrangements. The delicate yet powerful beauty of their singing and their dynamic stage presence make a Capital City Five performance a memorable experience.

Musically, the group is firmly rooted in tradition. The members point to various sources for their material, including the old hymns, early recordings, and songs learned at home during childhood. Those childhood songs are especially important, as the group makes a clear distinction between gospel songs and spirituals, both of which are featured in their programs. James Thomas, a fifty-year veteran of the group, explains the difference: “Gospel is just like when a preacher is giving you the Word. A spiritual is a smoother, softer way of giving the Word, and there’s a difference between a gospel song and a spiritual.” Warren Baldwin adds, “Gospel is more like you’re singing and preaching. The



The Capital City Five (left to right): James Thomas, Wilbert Jones, Louis Boyd, Millard Jones, David Jones, and Warren Baldwin. *Photo by Carmine Prioli, 2005.*

spirituals, though, they're the songs that just come out of your soul, that tell about people's experiences The spirituals are older songs which have passed through the generations, but we arrange them to suit our own style. Gospel songs are faster and have a message, just like the word 'gospel' itself, which means 'good news.' And that's what we're doing."

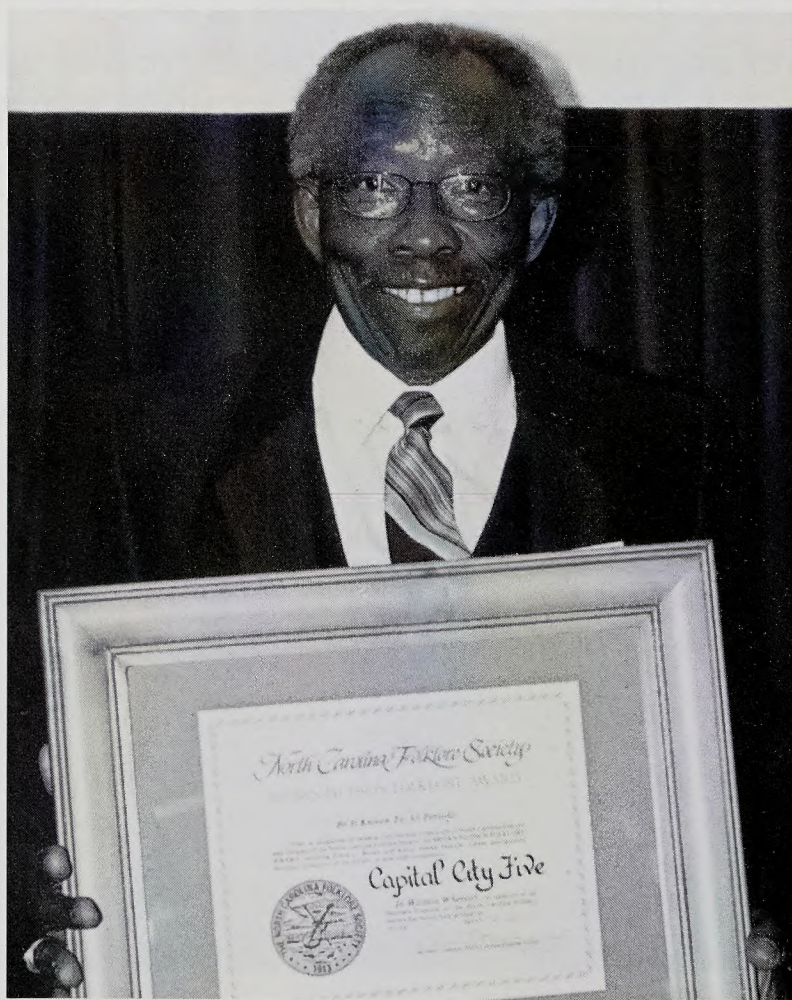
In speaking with the Capital City Five, it becomes evident that music has been not so much a choice for them as a way of life. The three Jones brothers' father was a minister who often sang at home and encouraged his sons to do the same. As David Jones recalls, "We learned to sing with the 'do-re-mi' notes and our hymnal had the old shape notes. We brothers sang together in church a little bit, too, besides being in the choir." Warren Baldwin, who is widely regarded in the gospel community as one of the very finest bass singers in the business, sang with his older sisters as a youngster and was taught by his father, also a bass. James Thomas recalls his early musical training: "Out in the country, in Johnston County, we used to sit by the fireplace, me, my brother, my two sisters and Mama, and we sang together. I was so little I couldn't even talk plain, but I was in there trying to sing. That was sixty-five to seventy years ago." Both he and David Jones relate that even now some of the old songs will surface in memory, be brought to the group for a tryout, and sometimes even be added to their repertoire.

When asked if their style has changed over the years, Thomas is emphatic: "Not very much. Not very much. That's one reason we don't use a guitar player any more. The guitar player we had was good, but he wanted to change our style and we didn't want to change. He kept saying that everything was faster now and had a different beat and so on, but we didn't want to do that. We decided to do without instruments and go back to the *a capella* style." Their quartet-based harmony often employs a "call and response" pattern between the lead and background singers. This goes back to the earliest times of African-American music and became the stylistic foundation for the popular quartets of the 1930s and 1940s.

The Capital City Five maintains a busy singing schedule. While four of them are members of the St. Matthew Baptist Church in Raleigh and sing with its male chorus, nearly every weekend finds the group traveling to perform at churches and other venues from Atlanta to Boston. Featured at Asheville's "First Night 2001," they were invited back for "Belle Chere" the following year. They have also appeared as part of the PineCone-sponsored Music of the Carolinas concert series at the North Carolina Museum of History.

Community service has always been a priority for the group, as shown by their work with the Wendell-Wake Chapter of the NAACP. Says the chapter's President, Mary E. Perry, "For many years Brother Thomas organized the Gospel Extravaganza for our annual Martin Luther King Day celebration and the Capital City Five still perform at our banquet every year. They also help with our Mother of the Year program and other fundraisers we have, and have never asked for a fee. They have been a wonderful asset, feeding our souls while helping fill our treasury."

To its members, the Capital City Five is not just a singing group but a ministry. James Thomas puts it this way: "I believe that if it wasn't as much a ministry for this group it wouldn't have lasted so long. In fact, I know it wouldn't have. That's what has kept us together and led us to put so much into it for the past sixty-two years. When we sing, we're trying to spread the good news. It's not just something to pat your foot to." In view of their musical excellence, artistic integrity, traditional base, dedication to faith, activity as performers, community involvement, and longevity as a group, it is my pleasure to present the Capital City Five with the North Carolina Folklore Society's Brown-Hudson Award.



Warren Baldwin. *Photo by Carmine Prioli, 2005.*

2005 Community Traditions Award

Little River Legacy

The Musical Terry Family of Durham and Orange Counties

~ by Peter Kramer

In the fall of 1965, a graduate student at Duke University ventured into rural Durham County to record the fiddle tunes of farmer and logger, Edsel Terry. Those recordings made their way into the Library of Congress' folklife collection, and the graduate student—Alan Jabbour—went on to become the Library's chief administrator of folklore for more than two decades.

Thirty-nine years later, on May 28, 2004, Jabbour returned to an Orange County, North Carolina, farm for a reunion with Edsel Terry, now eighty-three, and to play with other members of the musical Terry family: brothers Roland (fiddle and mandolin), Harold (banjo, Dobro), Tim (fiddle), and Davis (bass). These four are the sons of Edsel's brother, the late John Roland Terry, and comprise the heart of the Doc Branch Band.

Today, the Doc Branch Band plays at community dances, fundraisers, and pig-pickin's. The band is well-grounded in the old-time fiddle and



country tunes they learned from their father's generation, but are quite capable of reproducing classic Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs songs, as well as current bluegrass tunes. Newcomers learn the musical history of the area from this band, and the future of the musical tradition seems secure, as the brothers have nine children. These first-cousins range from twelve to twenty-two years of age, and every one plays an instrument or is a talented clogger.

The Terry family's origins in the Little River Valley of what

Edsel Terry. *All photos by Carmine Prioli, 2005.*

is now northern Durham and northeastern Orange Counties go back earlier than 1750, but this nomination focuses on their musical contributions of the past 100 years. All the Terrys mentioned in this narrative still live on the same Little River Valley land that their forebears first settled and farmed before the United States became an independent nation. Fiddler and dance-caller Isaac (Ike) Terry tells how his father established the Clover Hill Dance Club in 1922. The building, which still stands on Ike's farm, hosted as many as 200 dancers a night until the early 1950s. It was a major draw for country and city people for miles around, especially for soldiers at nearby Camp Butner during World War II. Edsel and his brothers, John Roland (accordion) and Joseph (guitar), were often the house band, and Tim Terry remembers that his parents first met there.

A few years after the war, the family built the Pick and Bow club on nearby Guess Road, very close to where many family members lived. For fifty years until the recent sale of the building to a civic club, the Pick and Bow served as the musical center and major community building of the area. It was the setting for fundraising dances for the nearby Caldwell Volunteer Fire Department. Edsel Terry played there with the Doc Branch Band at his own eightieth birthday party in December, 2001. Also in attendance was retired dairy farmer and Edsel's cousin, Pegram Terry, a noted caller in his own right, as well as Edsel's long-time admirer, Alan Jabbour.

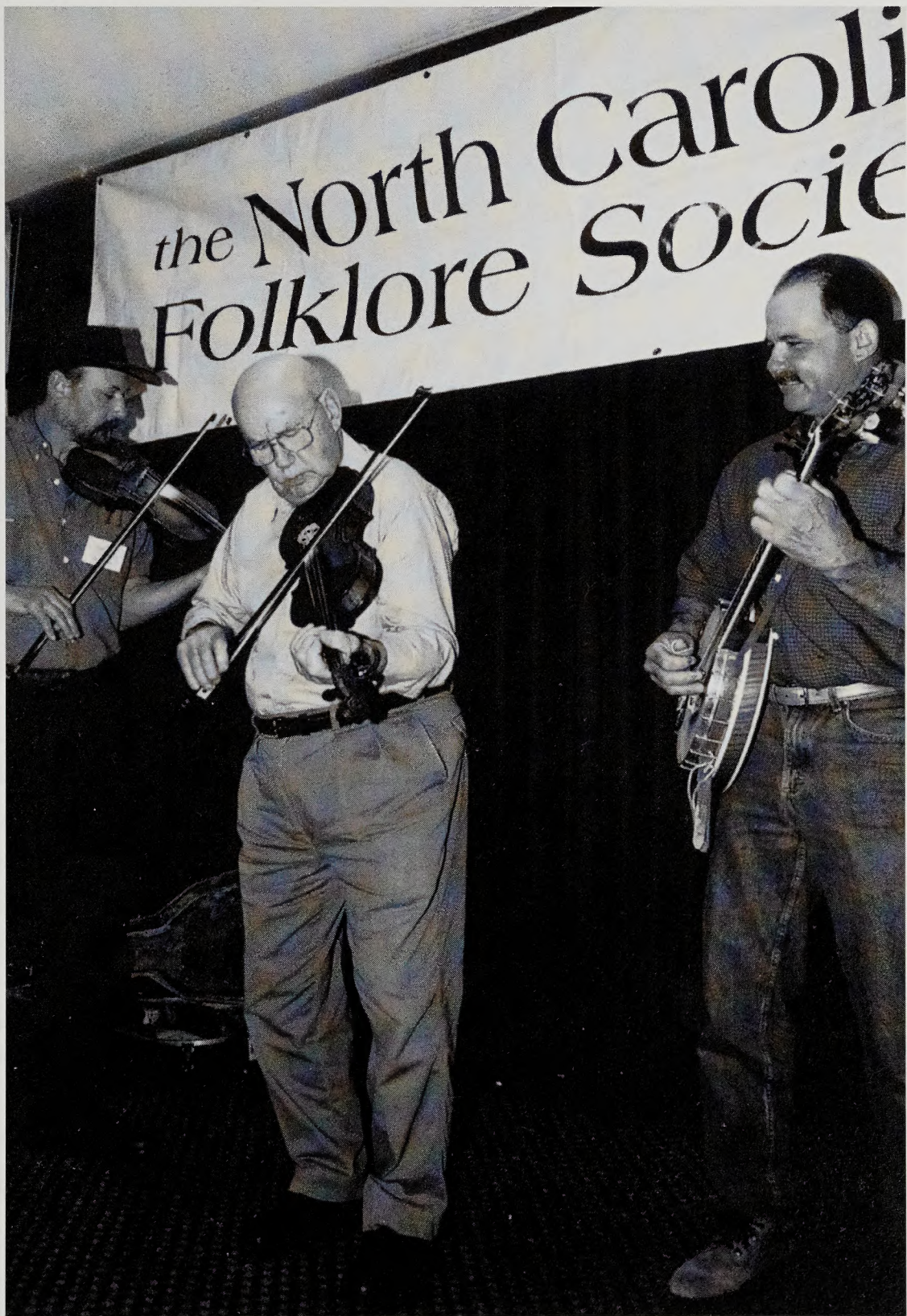
For those lucky enough to hear and witness the Jabbour-Terry reunion, the night was magical. Several of Jabbour's longtime friends in the old-time music field, including musicians Alice Gerrard, Carl Jones, Joe Newberry, Gail Gillespie, Bill Henderson, Jim Watson, and folklorist



The Terry Family (left to right): Davis, Tim, Edsel, Harold, and Roland Terry.

Cece Conway stood in the circle with Edsel and his four nephews. For hours the musicians played many of the songs that Alan first heard Edsel record so many years ago, back in 1965. The evening completed a circle they started nearly forty years earlier.

For the contributions they have made to the heritage and music of North Carolina, it gives me great pleasure to present the North Carolina Folklore Society's 2005 Community Traditions Award to the Terry family.



Contributors

R. Calvin Dark II graduated from Duke University. In 2002, he was a Fulbright Scholar to Morocco. Calvin is the author of *Tales from My Dark Side*, a collection of short stories about the Darks, a Siler City, North Carolina, family. (See www.talesfrommydarkside.com) He resides in Washington, DC, where he writes and works with the Moroccan American Center for Policy.

Foy Allen Edelman received a BA in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and also attended the School of Design at North Carolina State University. She has worked as a city and social planner, and was a computer consultant for eighteen years. She is now in the process of changing careers to become an artist and writer of non-fiction.

George Holt established the Office of Folklife Programs within the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources in 1977. In 1994, George was the Program Director of *Southern Crossroads*, an eighteen-day festival of Southern music and culture held as part of the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. He currently is Director of Performing Arts & Film Programs at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

Peter Kramer is a clinical social worker by profession, who is also a musician, writer, and arts volunteer. He lives on a farm near Hillsborough with his wife, the writer Susan Gladin. On several happy occasions, he has sat in on guitar with the Doc Branch Band.

Thomas McGowan, long-time editor of the *North Carolina Folklore Journal*, is Professor of English at Appalachian State University. In 2003, he received the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Daniel W. Patterson is Kenan Professor Emeritus of English and former Chair of the Curriculum in Folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a Fellow of the American Folklore Society. He helped establish the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dan's many publications include *A Tree Accurst: Bobby McMillon and Stories of Frankie Silver* (2000), which received the Chicago Folklore Prize.

Ben Runke is a Raleigh native who studied music and took one folklore course at East Carolina University. He became a lifelong fan of traditional music in the 1960s, after hearing Doc Watson in Raleigh's Sidetrack coffeehouse. Ben is the owner of the Guitar Workshop.

John N. Wall is a Professor of English at North Carolina State University. He is a recipient of the university's highest award, the Alexander Quarles Holladay Medal for Excellence. John is also an award-winning documentary photographer. In 2004, he received an Emerging Artist Grant from the United Arts Council of Wake County.



Above: Risa Smith of Durham sells hand-made quilts and baked goods at the North Carolina Farmers Market, Raleigh. *Photo by John N. Wall, 2004.*

Front cover photo: Keith W. Allen (1963-2005) stringing hot peppers for his father-in-law, Otis Johnson, at the Johnson's Farm stall, North Carolina Farmers Market. *Photo by John N. Wall, 2004.*

Back cover photo: Descendants of Lucinda Wilson assembled for the Yancey County family reunion. *Photo by Foy Allen Edelman, 2004.*

